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THE TIMES

No. 66,107 SATURDAY JANUARY 24 1998 http://www.the-times.co.uk

Clinton 'cheated' with four others

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

MONICA LEWINSKY believed that President Clinton "cheated" on her with four other women — three of whom worked at the White House — it was alleged yesterday.

It was not clear why she suspected the President and the other women were not named, but Ms Lewinsky is said to have told her friend Linda Tripp that they could "cope with the jealousy" better than she.

Further reports of gifts between Mr Clinton and the young assistant also emerged yesterday, including a story that Ms Lewinsky told a Pentagon colleague that she had bought ties for the President. Mr Clinton is said to have admitted in his deposition in the Paula Jones sexual harassment case that he gave Ms Lewinsky a dress.

The fresh details of the President's alleged affair added to the turmoil in the White House, where advisers were struggling over how to deal with the crisis. The President's spokesman Mike McCurry said that Mr Clinton wanted to respond "sooner rather than later" to the flood of stories that he lied under oath about an affair with Ms Lewinsky and encouraged her to do the same. He denied widespread reports of a conflict between political advisers, who want the President to "come out swinging", and lawyers who do not want him to make public comments until they have fully responded to sheafs of subpoenas from Kenneth Starr, the independent counsel who is investigating the allegations.

But Mr McCurry admitted that they were not sure about a format for the President to offer "an explanation to the American people". The White House was also unsure whether the President could give his account before the State of the Union speech to Congress on Tuesday night, when he will lay out his legislative blueprint for the year.

Mr Clinton has vehemently denied the stories — he opened yesterday's Cabinet meeting saying that the allegations were "entirely untrue" — but he has so far declined to describe the extent of his acquaintance with Ms Lewinsky. His close friend and adviser Vernon Jordan has also vigorously denied allegations that Mr Clinton asked him to urge Ms Lewinsky to lie under oath about the affair.

As Mr Clinton's Cabinet rallied to give public support, the Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said: "I believe the allegations are completely untrue," adding that "the American people would be appalled" if Cabinet members did not focus on their jobs.

The reports of an affair between Mr Clinton and Ms Lewinsky came to light indirectly because of the civil lawsuit brought against the President by Paula Jones, who accuses him of sexual harassment when he was Governor of Arkansas.

Ms Lewinsky has given evidence to Ms Jones's lawyers and was due to do so again yesterday, but her deposition was postponed indefinitely by US District Judge Susan Webber Wright while her lawyer, William Ginsburg, sought immunity from prosecution from Mr Starr in return for her co-operation. Mr Ginsburg said, however, that Mr Starr was rejecting any deal and he bitterly attacked the way that his client had been treated.

Referring to the 20 hours of taped conversations between Ms Lewinsky and Ms Tripp, he said: "Right off the bat we talk about stings and wires and traps. I'm not happy with that at all, especially when you're dealing with a 24-year old girl. It's not nice." His client was, he said, "devastated, concerned, upset and fearful".

Mr Ginsburg accused Mr Starr of "luring" his client to the Ritz-Carlton hotel near the Pentagon and, with the help of four or five FBI agents and three or four lawyers, detaining and questioning her for eight hours without legal representation. "That should frighten anyone. That's very, very sad, isn't it?" he said.

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Millions caught in insurance scandal

BY GAVIN LUMSDEN

AN insurance mis-selling scandal is threatening to engulf up to 7.5 million people who bought insurance policies aimed at protecting them if they lose their jobs. They could lose all means-tested benefits, or be forced to pay them back when the policy pays out.

The Government is holding emergency talks to try to sort out the mess, which could affect four times as many people as the pensions mis-selling scandal. About 15 million people have taken out credit insurance policies in recent years to ensure their mortgages and personal loans are repaid if they lose their jobs or become too ill to work.

However, it emerged this week that social security rules dating back to 1988 could render about half of these policies worthless by penalising claimants who receive insurance money directly, rather than having it go straight to their lenders. Those who have already received benefits may be forced to repay them.

The Times has discovered that many banks and building societies are continuing to sell the policies, even though they could be wholly inappropriate. High street names can earn up to 40 per cent commission on every policy.

One loan applicant was yesterday asked by a NatWest branch why she would not take up such a policy. Her reply, that the policy might well be worthless, was not considered satisfactory. The policy would have added an extra £40 a month to her mortgage payments.

At Barclays, whose chief executive, Martin Taylor, heads the Government's tax and benefits review, credit insurance payouts are made straight into borrowers' accounts. This could jeopardise their entitlements.

Anyone taking out a £5,000 Barclayloan over five years would pay an extra £26.13 for insurance cover, a total of £1,567.80 over the term of the loan. Barclayloan credit insurance is provided by the Financial Insurance Company, a division of Consolidated Finance Insurance.

A Barclays spokeswoman said: "We are surprised that the benefits of those who insure their debts are being cut. This goes against what the Government is trying to do to encourage self-reliance. We are seeking clarification."

The scandal came to light when an unemployed man in Co Durham was left with £3 a month after the local benefits agency deducted £157 — the payout on his car and credit card insurance — from his monthly jobseeker's allowance of £160.

In a written answer to the Commons on Thursday, Keith Bradley, an Under-Secretary of State for Social Security, confirmed that insurance

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PETER NICHOLLS

Olympic steps: Tony Banks puts Ruth Gledhill into a foxtrot throwaway oversway

Stepping out with Banks

BY RUTH GLEDHILL

FOR a Chelsea football fan who has never had a formal dance lesson, Tony Banks MP is a natural-born mover.

When the Minister for Sport declared in *The Times* earlier this week his determination to get ballroom dancing on to the Olympic programme by 2004, we quick-stepped in with a challenge to discover if his footwork on the dance floor matched his quick-witted performances in the Commons.

"Ballroom dancing has a level of civilisation about it. This makes it one of the more desirable sports," he said as he threw me into a contra-check in the tango beneath the crystal chandeliers on the sprung Canadian maple floor. "I don't recall there ever being much in the way of crowd violence at ballroom dancing competitions."

Dennis Drew, a top dance coach, and I put the minister through his paces at Mr Drew's dance studio in Manor Park, east London.

Barely working up a sweat, Mr Banks flexed his knees, straightened his back and put me into a same-foot lunge in the waltz and throwaway oversway in the foxtrot. We stopped short at the Spanish drag and standing spin — through lack of time, rather than inclination.

"His lines are not bad," said Mr Drew, a past president of the International Dance Teachers' Association. "They are very difficult to do. He has a good, natural poise. He's doing them better than some people who've been trying for years."

Mr Banks, 54, dances socially with his wife Sally and works out regularly in the gym. His strong, compact frame gives him the innate athletic ability necessary on the ballroom floor.

And he is clearly applying the same muscle to dance sport that he has already wielded on behalf of football. He plans to lobby the International Olympic Committee on behalf of dance sport when he attends the Winter Olympics in two weeks' time.

School hikers killed by ski-slope avalanche

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

AT LEAST seven people were killed in an avalanche during a school hiking expedition in the southern French Alps yesterday. As night fell rescue workers were still searching in the snow for six more.

The group of 32 hikers on snowshoes, 26 of them French teenagers, was engulfed by the avalanche as they descended, away from the designated ski trails, the mountain above the Orres ski station at about 1.30pm.

Eight helicopters were dispatched and more than 100 rescue workers with a dozen dogs had pulled 19 survivors and the seven bodies from the snow by late afternoon.

The party, aged between 13 and 15, from a school outside Paris, was accompanied by six adults.

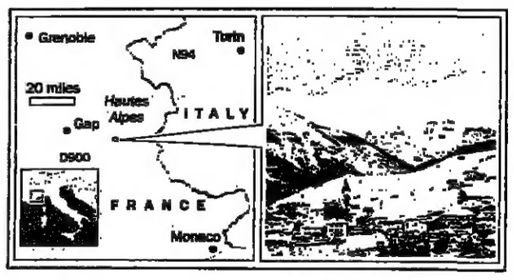
Four of the most seriously injured hikers were flown to hospitals at Gap and Embrun. The others, suffering from cuts and bruises, were treated at the scene.

"Helicopters are flying relays between the site of the accident and the station at Orres," François Badjily, director of the office of tourism at Orres, said. "The station was rapidly mobilised, with ski attendants, instructors and anyone else available going to reinforce the rescue workers, which allowed the injured to be removed very, very quickly."

The avalanche may have been triggered by someone skiing above the scene.

Earlier this week the French meteorological service warned of the high risk after falls of a metre of snow above the 1,800-metre level. Some ski slopes have been closed and winter sports resorts were placed on maximum alert.

Snow reports, page 34



Ticketless World Cup fans 'must stay away'

FROM BEN MACINTYRE

THE Foreign Office is planning an intensive publicity campaign in the run-up to the World Cup to try to deter British football fans without tickets from swarming into French cities where the English and Scottish teams are due to play.

The cost of the campaign, likely to include television advertising, has been estimated at £1 million.

The English Football Association is hoping to mount a simultaneous "charm offensive" in France, probably fronted by England manager Glenn Hoddle, to disprove the widespread assumption that all English fans are hooligans.

The planned cross-Channel information blitz follows meetings in France between French World Cup organisers and British police experts about security for the tournament. The scarcity of tickets allocated to British fans and the ease of travelling to France have raised fears that thousands of supporters could converge on French cities hosting matches in the hope of obtaining black-market tickets or incite violence.

Plans to erect vast outdoor video screens in the ten host cities could offer what one British policeman described as "a standing invitation" to ticketless fans.

☐ Newcastle United of the Premiership meet Stevenage Borough, the Vauxhall Conference club, in the fourth round of the FA Cup tomorrow. Tony Banks, the Minister for Sport, will be among the 8,700 crowd ..... Page 33

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UFF calls an end to killings of Catholics

By Martin Fletcher, Chief Ireland Correspondent

THE biggest loyalist paramilitary organisation in Northern Ireland yesterday announced it was ending its killings of Roman Catholics, but within hours Belfast was rocked by another shooting.

A Catholic man was hit at least twice in the head last night in north Belfast. His condition was critical. Bill Stewart, the RUC's Assistant Chief Constable, said the man had been laying pipes with a digger and preparing to go home when a gunman attacked. "This looks like another sectarian shooting," he said.

Earlier in the day a police raid on a house near the Shankill Road uncovered the biggest cache of loyalist explosives found in many years. Separate security operations netted a number of suspected loyalist terrorists.

The anouncement that the Ulster Freedom Fighters was ending its terror campaign came a day after Ronnie Flanagan, head of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, accused it of murdering three Catholics since New Year's Eve.

The UFF said it had concluded what it called a "measured military response" made "unavoidable" by republican aggression. That "military response" included the murders of a man preparing to see in the new year with his girlfriend in a Belfast bar; a taxi driver outside his depot last Monday night; and, on Wednesday, a motor store employee leaving work. None had paramilitary connections.

It remains unclear whether the UFF's political representatives, the Ulster Democratic Party, will be expelled from the Stormont peace talks when they resume in London next week. David Adams, a UDP spokesman, said the UFF's statement was the result of meetings over the previous 24 hours during which his party's leaders had emphasised their opposition to violence.

There was no corresponding announcement from the Loyalist Volunteer Force which has also been murdering Catholics since the Irish National Liberation Army murdered its leader, Billy Wright, in the Maze prison last month. In all six Catholics have been killed and several others injured.

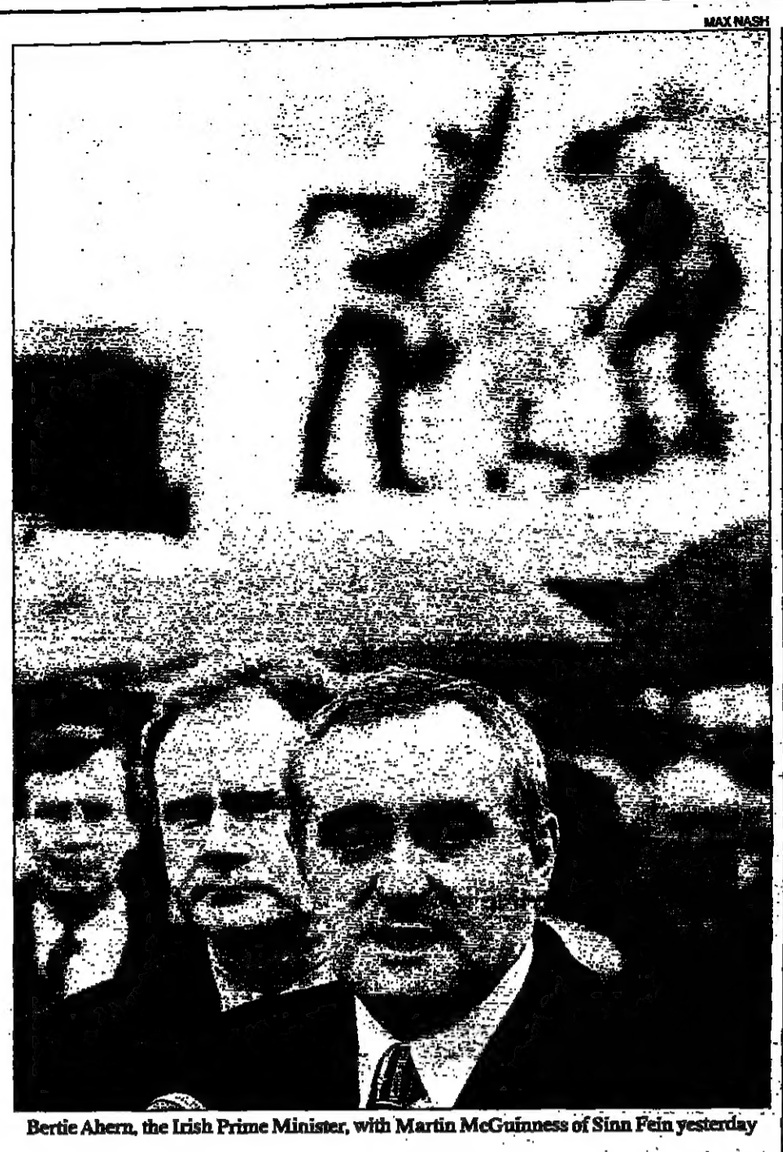
Yesterday morning the police raided a terraced house in UFF territory near the Shankill Road in West Belfast and seized 100lbs of commercial explosives, 200 pounds of a substance believed to be explosives, and other bomb-making equipment.

The police arrested three men following the shooting of a Catholic man in Newtonabbey, on Belfast's northern fringe, on Thursday night. No group claimed responsibility for the ambush, though the UFF was the prime suspect. Chris McMahon, was ambushed as he left the bakery where he worked and was in critical condition yesterday.

In another security operation the police arrested about four suspected terrorists as they drove in two cars through the Malone area of south Belfast. The men were from Portadown, an LVF stronghold.

Three men were also being questioned about the killing of Benedict Hughes, the motor store employee.

MAX NASH



Bertie Ahern, the Irish Prime Minister, with Martin McGuinness of Sinn Fein yesterday

Labour attempt to smear Hague backfires

By Nicholas Watt, Political Correspondent

AN ATTEMPT by Labour spin doctors to smear William Hague backfired spectacularly yesterday when they wrongly accused the Tory leader of taking his fiancée to Hong Kong at the taxpayer's expense.

A senior Labour source was forced into an embarrassing climbdown after it emerged that Conservatives paid the travel expenses of Ffion Jenkins to last June's hand-over ceremonies in Hong Kong.

The rare admission of a lapse by a Labour spin doctor came after Mr Blair's office tried to turn the tables on the Tories over the Government's decision to allow unmarried ministers to take their partners on official overseas visits.

Just before midday yesterday a senior Labour source scoffed at Tory taunts and pointed out that the Government had paid for Miss Jenkins to accompany Mr Hague to Hong Kong. Within hours of the briefing — after Conservative Central Office had got wind of the claim — the same Labour source admitted he had been wrong and blamed the Foreign Office for feeding him incorrect information about Miss Jenkins, who married Mr Hague last month.

The Labour source said: "Labour was informed — apparently reliably — from the Foreign Office that this was the case and not unreasonably we sought to draw this to the attention of journalists. It turns out not to be the case. Fine. We were acting in good faith. This was not muckraking. It was a mix-up."

Michael Howard, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, last night wrote to Mr Blair to demand an apology for the "scandalous attempt" to smear Mr Hague. He wrote: "Can you confirm that the cost of Mrs Hague's flight was not met by the taxpayer and ensure that Mrs Hague receives an apology and that the allegation is withdrawn?"

A Tory source said: "This is incompetent and extremely embarrassing. Labour presume that everyone has fallen to their standards."

Straw raises prospect of a coalition

By Philip Webster, Political Editor

JACK STRAW spoke last night of Labour's readiness to work with other political parties in a mission to restore people's trust in the way they are governed. The Home Secretary, chosen by Tony Blair to relaunch Labour's central modernisation message after some recent faltering, declared that Labour's support was based on a "new coalition" and placed the party in the "radical centre" of politics.

He said: "Tony Blair's Government reaches out beyond the traditional left-right divide. Where we can work together with other parties, or with people with no party political background, we will do so. We're not driven by dogma but by ideas and pragmatism. If something is right we'll do it."

His remarks were intended to remind activists that they should not forget the middle-class voters who turned to Labour last May. But they will also strengthen the Left's suspicions that Mr Blair is willing to consider coalition government.

Mr Straw, speaking in King's Lynn, Norfolk, said Labour was at the centre because it aimed to appeal to the great mass of the people, and it was radical because it recognised that there must be change based on modernisation and innovation. Things had gone wrong and there would be more problems along the way, but "we will never lose sight of the long-term project".

He explained why the Prime Minister had ordered his team on to the campaign trail again so soon after the election. His message was that Labour had underestimated the cynicism about politics and government that had built up under the Tories.

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Great Minds Think Viglen

'Dust was so thick you could not see hand'

By Paul Wilkinson

AFTER 32 years down the pit, often working in a "black fog" of coal dust, Ken Williams spends most of his day immobile in a chair, crippled by breathing problems.

But yesterday as he toasted the High Court decision, he said was not upset over the way he had contracted bronchitis and emphysema. "I am not bitter. I was just doing my job to make a living," he said. "It has been a long fight and a trying time and I'm just glad it is all coming to an end in our favour. Not just for me but for everyone else."

Mr Williams, a 59-year-old grandfather, followed his father down the mine when he left school at 15. By the time he was made redundant 32 years later at Treeton Colliery, near his home in Rotherham, South Yorkshire, he had serious chest problems. "I am deteriorating all the time and I have no leisure life left. I just have to take things one day at a time. There are days when am left gasping for breath.

"The coal face was blasted with explosives and 40 of us had to get down on our hands and knees, shovelling coal with the dust so thick you could not see your hand in front of your face."

Mr Williams uses a nebuliser inhaler to clear his chest up to six times a day. Doctors described him as as "very ill, short of breath, regularly immobile, with 60 per cent lung damage".

LUNG DAMAGE

Pit negligence will cost taxpayers £1bn

By Ian Murray, Medical Correspondent

THE Government faces paying £1 billion compensation to former miners and their widows after the High Court ruled yesterday that the health of coal workers could be ruined by inhaling dust that should have been filtered from air in the pits.

Helplines set up by four firms of solicitors prepared to take claims forward were jammed once it was known that test cases had succeeded, with an average of 40 new cases an hour being taken on by each of the firms. All those with chest conditions who worked in the mines since nationalisation in 1947 will be able to make a claim if they can prove a link between their illness and coal dust.

This means that up to a million people may be eligible for compensation. The Government is arranging urgent meetings with the solicitors early next month to work out ways of processing the claims. The money will have to come from the Treasury's central fund. It would be enough to build 200 new schools or finanace the NHS for two weeks.

In a judgment strongly critical of the now defunct nationalised coal industry, Mr Justice Turner said there was "abundant evidence ... that officials interpreted their duties as requiring the production of coal first and the taking of precautions in respect of health second".

Most of the evidence of high dust levels in the test cases related to the time from nationalisation in 1947 through to the end of the 1960s. However as late as the 1970s, the judge said, British Coal appeared "to have become mesmerised or corrupted by the notion" that it did not need to do anything to reduce dust unless a coal face had been officially "not approved" for working. Lack of adequate monitoring meant that many coal faces which should have been closed remained open.

He accepted six of the eight test cases brought by the men's union, Nacods, rejecting the other two because they failed to prove a link between their chest illness and coal dust. British Coal and the National Coal Board were said to have been negligent at common law and in breach of their duties under the Mines and Quarries Act.

He awarded damages to the six — two of whom have died since the case began in 1996 — ranging from £3,200 to £10,500 for pain and suffering from diseases like emphysema, asthma and chronic bronchitis. Damages for smokers were limited. The awards are likely to be increased on February 6, when the men will seek compensation for loss of earnings and medical costs. Another 10,000 more cases are already waiting.

'Dinosaur' who refused to die

By Simon de Bruxelles

UNION MAN

BLEDDYN HANCOCK is a dinosaur who refused to lie down when told he had become extinct. The union official who has seen his industry devastated was determined to fight on for compensation for his members, despite every obstacle put in his way by British Coal.

Mr Hancock spent the first 20 years of his career down a pit and the last nine engaged in the compensation battle. Yesterday he admitted: "There were times when it all looked too daunting .. It was a real David and Goliath battle. British Coal had all the money they wanted and an army of lawyers. But in the end it became a crusade."

Mr Hancock, 44, and two solicitors, Gareth Morgan and Peter Evans, did the bulk of the background investigation, sifting though mountains of NCB and British Coal paperwork. "Over the years we went through thirty million pages of documents to find the evidence we needed," said Mr Hancock, the South Wales general secretary of Nacods — the National Association of Colliery Overmen, Deputies and Shotfirers.

He first instructed solicitors to investigate the possibility of legal action in June 1989. Proceedings were formally started against British Coal the next year. Retired miners were among those who helped to meet the cost.

Millions caught in insurance scandal

Continued from page 1

money paid into claimants' accounts could be deducted from all income-related benefits. As well as jobseeker's allowance, these include income support, housing benefit and council tax benefit, on which millions of people depend.

The DSS has insisted no rule change has occurred. However, it is known that since Novemember, benefits agency staff at jobcentres have begun to implement the rules more consistently.

The Association of British Insurers, whose members earned £1.7 billion in premiums last year, denied the policies had been mis-sold. "We draft our polices in the light of how rules are practised rather than how they may be potentially applied. Insurers presumed that the payments would be cleared. We are talking urgently with the Government to see how this can be resolved."

Derek Foster, the Labour MP who highlighted the problem, said: "Fifteen million people who have been prudent in taking insurance for a rainy day are to be caught in a thunderstorm without an umbrella."

Weekend money, page 64

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Duchess books in as America's queen of diets

By Dominic Kennedy and Robin Young

The duchess of York is launching a new career next week as a celebrity cook, promoting a collection of recipes designed to help overweight Americans to shed pounds. She says that she has cured her lifelong addiction to sausage rolls and mayonnaise by choosing healthy options such as bean salad and melon soup.

The 125 recipes range from the exotic (red snapper *primavera*) to the mundane (cucumber sandwiches). The meals are arranged in chapters with headings including "A Working Mother's Lunch", "Supper After A Horseback Ride", "Saturday Night Supper and Videos", "Traveler's Repast" and "Après-Ski Lunch". It is a remarkable achievement for a woman who admits she rarely cooks.

The duchess, who has been chosen by Weight Watchers to be their ambassadress-at-large, begins a promotional tour of America on Monday to launch *Dining with the Duchess*. She once said that she was addicted to mayonnaise and white toast at school, but she now sings the virtues of Afghani bread (available in supermarkets or specialty stores), lemon couscous and pears with peppered goat cheese.

Her eclectic range of ingredients is aimed towards habitués of US delis, with items rarely found in a British grocer's shop, such as blueberries, low sodium tomato juice, Asiago cheese and champagne vinegar. The blurb proclaims: "From the most basic family dinner to a cocktail party for eight, you, too, can dine like the Duchess of York, every day of the year."

It describes the duchess as a role model: "A chic, slimmed-down single mother with a new and exciting career." There are many confessions which will endear her to the huge and hungry women who are the likely buyers of *Dining with the Duchess*. The duchess admits she went on a "mad crash diet" of oranges and meat to shed 26lb so she could fit into her wedding gown.

When the Duke of York was at sea during her pregnancy, she numbed her emotions by gorging on smoked mackerel pate sandwiches, reaching over 14 stone just before the birth. On a youth hostel holiday aged 18, she ate too much strudel and became huge.

During her first week at Royal Ascot ("the British equivalent of the Kentucky Derby") she says that she came to know her future husband. "The one thing I remember," she says, "was the chocolate profiteroles. Andrew and I joked about them over lunch."

In her introduction, she writes: "When it was first announced that I would be marrying Prince Andrew, the British press greeted me with open arms, calling me 'Great Fun Fergie, a breath of fresh air.' Yet the moment I began gaining weight, that very same press turned on me, calling me 'Fat Fergie' which gave way to 'Fat and Appalling Fergie' and ultimately, 'The Duchess of Pork'. While I can laugh at those names today, it is no surprise that at the time I felt humiliated, alone, defeated. When my life was out of control, so was my weight. At times, I felt as if I was on a downward spiral, spinning faster and faster."

Invitation to dine like a duchess: the Working Mother's Lunch

She rarely cooks. "When I was a single working girl living in London, I tended to live on student staples like baked beans on toast or whatever I could find in the fridge. Once I was married, I was unable to cook for myself and my husband because our apartment at Buckingham Palace did not have a kitchen."

Her breakfasts consist of fresh fruit salad, wholemeal toast and weak Earl Grey tea. In the past year, she has given her own cook a new list of favourite foods because her tastes have changed.

"Now, instead of simply giving in to my penchant for sausage rolls and mayonnaise, I seek out food that is good for my body."

Each menu is preceded with some thoughts from the duchess. Before a "Gardener's Supper" of minestrone, aubergine, asparagus vinaigrette and raspberries, she writes: "In my life, a 'day off' is almost unheard of . . ."

The recipes include a calorie count and exhaustive nutritional information. Her "Twenty-Minute Minestrone", for instance, has 254 calories, 7g of fat, 2g of saturated fat, 19mg of cholesterol, 1,176mg of sodium, 39g of carbohydrate, 10g of dietary fibre, 12g of protein and 127mg of calcium. It is unclear whether *Dining with the Duchess* will be published in Britain, where there is already a plethora of novelty chefs. The duchess knows she risks being labelled the "One Fat Lady".

The cover of her book is a portrait by the photographer Greg Gorman, showing a glamorous duchess leaning on a chair at a table piled high with healthy food. This may be as near as she has come to preparing any of the meals. Whether she has devised the recipes is a moot point. The $25 book, published by Simon & Schuster of New York, credits four "recipe developers", a nutrition consultant, a senior editor, associate editor and editorial director.

In Britain, cooks were unexcited about her book. Nico Ladenis, three-star chef of Chez Nico at Ninety Park Lane, London, said only a duchess could use it. "You would need a menu planning secretary and three or four assistants to cook most of the meals. They are very complicated and difficult."

Anna Del Conte, author of Italian cookery books, said: "Her descriptions are quite good and she does not throw in indiscriminate flavourings but I object when she says her fennel salad is like the Italians do. It is much too acid, and to serve it unadorned is not Italian at all." Frances Bissell, *The Times* cook, said: "There is nothing new or different about any of the recipes but they are very trendy."

The duchess has chosen to include "A Poolside Lunch" but this disappointingly involves only such banal items as vegetable salad and pita chips. Toes are off the menu.

Frances Bissell, Weekend, page 7

Portrait on the cover of the Weight Watchers' book: she remembers feeling "humiliated and alone" when labelled Fat Fergie

Dining with The Duchess

A Weekend Lunch with Friends

Traveler's Repast

A Highlands Picnic

After-Weekend Dinner

An Aquaminus Feast

A Poolside Lunch

A Working Mother's Lunch

Supper After a Horseback Ride

A Quiet New Year's Eve Celebration

Red Potatoes with Caviar and Cheese
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Special delivery for babies: junk mail

By Dominic Kennedy

BABY'S first steps, first words and first teeth are being joined by a new milestone: baby's first junk mail.

Sainsbury's is signing up newborn — and even unborn — children to join a 0-to-5 Club. They will have the distinction of receiving unsolicited marketing material through the post at an age when the most interesting thing to do with a letter is to eat it.

The club, announced this week, is an extension of the Sainsbury's loyalty card scheme, and offers discounts to young families who spend regularly at the store. The glossy application form says members can save £100 a year. It asks mothers to give the names, sexes and birthdays of children under five.

Pregnant women are requested to state the date their babies are due and how many they are expecting. "We would," says the small print at the base of the form, "like your permission to communicate directly with your children as they develop and grow older. Of course we recognise the particular sensitivity associated with talking to children and we would reflect this in all communications. If you do not wish us to contact your children directly please tick here."

Sainsbury's said yesterday that so far they planned to send Christmas and birthday cards directly to the children. Other ideas for unsolicited mail have yet to be finalised. The parents are likely to get postal invitations to join the Sainsbury's Bank.

Terri MacDermott, research officer of the Child Poverty Action Group, said: "It is quite worrying that supermarkets are manipulating consumers that are so young. It seems very heartless and manipulative."

The National Consumer Council said parents should be given the choice of "opting in" to their children being sent junk mail, rather than having to opt out by ticking a box. "Consumers have to be aware of the ways that they are being targeted," said a spokeswoman. Clark's, the shoe manufacturer, already send "junk mail" including birthday cards to under-fives who join their Toddler Team, but Ted Hart, the direct marketing manager, insists it is addressed to the mother, so she can throw it away.

The Mothers' Union was concerned at Sainsbury's scheme. "It does concern us because it is extra pressure on families," Carolyn Willett, a spokeswoman, said. She noted that the opt-out box was in small print and said: "They might miss it."

A spokeswoman for the supermarket chain said: "It is basically us trying to give parents of children aged nought to five something extra while they are in the store."

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SHARP CD Mini Hi-Fi ■ Multiplay – plays up to 3 CDs. ■ 10 watts (RMS) per channel. Model CDC401. Was £169.99. SAVE £10 — SALE PRICE £159.99

WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★ REVIEW SEPT 97 — **JVC** CD Mini Hi-Fi Multiplay – plays up to 3 CDs. Model D3U1. Was £229.99. SAVE £30 — SALE PRICE £199.99

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WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★ REVIEW SEP '97 SAVE £50

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SONY Ultra-Compact CD Micro Hi-Fi ■ Digital tuner. ■ Mega bass. Model PMC205. Was £159.99. SAVE £10 — SALE PRICE £149.99

WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★ REVIEW OCT 97 — **AIWA** Ultra-Compact CD Micro Hi-Fi Programmable CD player. Model LCG30. Was £179.99. SAVE £10 — SALE PRICE £169.99

SONY Ultra-Compact CD Micro Hi-Fi ■ 25 watts (RMS) per channel. ■ Remote control. Model PMC202. Was £179.99. SAVE £10 — SALE PRICE £169.99

EXTRA DISCOUNT — **SANYO** Ultra-Compact CD Micro Hi-Fi Model DCM56. Was £229.99. In-store Price £199.99. SAVE £50 — SALE PRICE £179.99

SONY Ultra-Compact CD Micro Hi-Fi Digital output for mini disc interface. Model PMC305. Was £199.99. SAVE £10 — SALE PRICE £189.99

WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★ REVIEW FEB 97 — **JVC** Ultra-Compact CD Micro Hi-Fi 2-piece component system. Model UXA50. Was £279.99. Was £249.99. SAVE £50 — CURRYS PRICE £229.99

DENON Ultra-Compact CD Micro Hi-Fi ■ Programmable CD. ■ Digital tuner. Model D803. CURRYS PRICE £299.99

WHAT HI-FI? HIGHLY RECOMMENDED 97 — **DENON** Ultra-Compact CD Micro Hi-Fi Multiplay – plays up to 6 CDs. Model DC1. CURRYS PRICE £379.99

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WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★ REVIEW AUG 97 — **SONY** CD Player ■ 20 track programmable CD. ■ Remote control. Model CDP-XE310. SUPERB VALUE — CURRYS PRICE £139.99

WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★ REVIEW SEPT 97 — **DENON** CD Player 20 track programmable CD. Model DCD425. SUPERB VALUE — CURRYS PRICE £149.99

WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★ REVIEW OCT 97 — **MARANTZ** CD Player, 30-track, programmable CD. Model CD48. NEW — CURRYS PRICE £199.99

WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★ REVIEW DEC 97 — **PHILIPS** Recordable CD Player Model CDR870. BUY NOW PAY 9 MONTHS LATER† NEW — CURRYS PRICE £499.99

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WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★ REVIEW MAY 96 — **KENWOOD** Amplifier 60 watts (DIN) per channel. Model KA3020SE. Was £199.99. SAVE £70 — SALE PRICE £129.99

TECHNICS Amplifier ■ 40 watts (DIN) power output. ■ 6 position input selectors. Model SUVX300. Was £149.99. SAVE £10 — SALE PRICE £139.99

WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★ REVIEW AUG 97 — **SONY** Amplifier ■ 50 watts power output. ■ 6 audio inputs. Model TAFE310. Was £159.99. SAVE £10 — CURRYS PRICE £149.99

WHAT HI-FI? HIGHLY RECOMMENDED 95 — **TECHNICS** Cassette Deck ■ Dolby B, C & HX Pro. ■ Auto-reverse. Model RS8X501. Was £169.99. SAVE £10 — SALE PRICE £159.99

MARANTZ Dolby Pro-Logic Receiver ■ 80 watts (RMS) per channel. ■ 3 channel logic. Model SR37L. Was £289.99. Was £199.99. SAVE £130 — CURRYS PRICE £169.99

WHAT HI-FI? BEST BUY 97 — **SONY** Recordable MultiDisc Player Full edit function. Model 510. Was £299.99. BUY NOW PAY 9 MONTHS LATER† SAVE £50 — SALE PRICE £249.99

SONY Dolby Pro-Logic Kit with 5 Speakers ■ 5 channel amplifier. ■ Remote control. Model DPLK10. CURRYS PRICE £249.99

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Woman stripped and beaten to death in street

By Kathryn Knight and Michael Horsnell

A WOMAN who devoted her life to caring for the homeless died in hospital yesterday after she and a neighbour were found stripped naked, tied together with nooses around their necks, and battered at a flat in South London.

Police began a murder inquiry after arresting an 18-year-old man at the scene. He was immediately committed to a psychiatric hospital under the Mental Health Act. The youth, who was a care in the community patient, was detained after Carla Thompson, 57, was found unconscious with another woman in the street near their homes in Tulse Hill, South London, early on Thursday.

Last night an urgent inquiry was ordered by hospital trusts and social services officials at Lambeth, South London, involved in the care of the alleged attacker.

Ms Thompson, who was described as an "eccentric Good Samaritan" and fundamentalist Christian who always kept her door open to the needy, was said to have been "tossed around like a rag doll". She died from multiple injuries in the Royal London Hospital, where she had been taken by air ambulance.

The second woman, Agnes Erume, who is in her late sixties, was in a serious but stable condition in King's College Hospital yesterday.

It is alleged that Ms Thompson, and her upstairs neighbour were attacked with a baseball bat after being tied together. Neighbours watched in horror as the attacker continued to batter their unconscious bodies as police tried to rescue them. Eventually the man was rugby-tackled by an officer and restrained with the help of others equipped with CS gas.

The South Thames NHS Executive confirmed last night that it has ordered an independent inquiry into mental health services run by four separate NHS trusts following the attack, which happened just before 8am yesterday.

Kate Wilcox, spokesman for the executive, said: "An inquiry has been ordered in the light of this incident with directions to produce a thorough report and recommendations as soon as possible. Although the precise circumstances of what happened remain unclear, it is something which is being taken very seriously. Part of the work of the inquiry will be to look at the psychiatric care offered in this part of London."

Jennifer Blake, 21, who had spent the night at Ms Thompson's one-bedroomed ground-floor flat the day before, fled as the attack began: "He walked in a with a big coil of rope and grabbed Carla by the hair, throwing her against the wall. "She was just being pulled around like a rag doll. I just ran out of the house. If I had stayed in there I don't think I would be alive."

Back me or sack me, Bell tells constituents

By Russell Jenkins

MARTIN BELL, the anti-sleaze MP, said yesterday that he would consider resigning if his constituents failed to back him in the dispute over his election expenses.

In a nervous performance, the former BBC war correspondent said that he would be asking his constituents to write to him after it emerged that a £9,400 legal bill had been paid by Labour and the Liberal Democrats.

The MP for Tatton, who captured the seat from Neil Hamilton, has been accused of failing to declare the bill on his election expenses.

Mr Bell insisted that he had done nothing wrong because he had not known about the fee, which was paid to lawyers who advised him to stand as an independent after Mr Hamilton threatened to sue him for standing as an anti-corruption candidate.

At a press conference in his constituency office in Knutsford, Cheshire, Mr Bell dismissed allegations of electoral impropriety as a "small storm in a small teacup".

DAVE KENDALL/PA

Martin Bell in his constituency yesterday: "It's a small storm in a small teacup"

Artist who was abstract rebel dies aged 89

By Dalya Alberge
Arts Correspondent

ONE of Britain's most revered abstract artists, Victor Pasmore, has died at his home in Malta. He was 89.

Born in Surrey, Pasmore was a founder of the pre-war Euston Road School, painting in the traditional figurative style of Whistler, Sickert and Bonnard. But in 1948 he perplexed admirers by embracing the values of abstraction and working in unconventional materials such as household paint, cement and glass fibre. His later work combined abstraction with references to natural forms and Japanese influences.

As Master of Painting at Durham University in 1958, he thundered: "The decadent art is in the Royal Academy." He became an RA member in 1984, and in 1981 he was made Companion of Honour. His work is represented in many public collections. His agent, Geoffrey Parton at Marlborough Fine Arts, said: "He died peacefully in his sleep."

Bonnard exhibition, page 11

Countess Spencer sues her lawyers

By Emma Wilkins

COUNTESS SPENCER is claiming £2 million in damages from her former solicitors over their handling of her affairs before her acrimonious divorce from Earl Spencer.

Lady Spencer, who reached a £1.8 million settlement with her former husband after a hearing in South Africa last December, has issued a writ at the High Court in London against the Family Law Consortium. Accusing her former solicitors of negligence, Lady Spencer claims she could have won £3.75 million if the hearing had been held in London.

Countess Spencer: angry at widespread publicity

The press could have been excluded from the hearing and publicity kept to a minimum, Lady Spencer alleges in her writ.

"One of the most public divorce hearings ever recorded took place, with the world's press in general and the British press in particular covering every detail of the proceedings," she says in the writ.

Lady Spencer, 32, alleges that David Hodson, one of three partners at the specialist law firm, was aware of her health problems, including an eating disorder and drug problems.

Mr Hodson, who is also a deputy district judge, was aware that "public and stressful divorce proceedings" would be likely to have a damaging effect on her health, the writ alleges. Lady Spencer, a former model, is claiming damages for the distress which she alleges was caused to her.

A spokeswoman for the Family Law Consortium, said: "We haven't been served with the writ and until we are served with it, we can't comment."

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Saatchi steps in to save rejected artist

SIMON WALKER

Rosie Snell in her studio in North London: "I think oil painting and landscapes are coming back. There's only so far you can shock people"

Rosie Snell almost gave up painting. Now her struggle for recognition has paid off, writes **Dalya Alberge**

A YOUNG artist driven almost to despair by the repeated rejection of art dealers has received the kind of recognition — and cash — that most contemporary artists only dream about.

Four landscapes by Rosie Snell, 26, have been bought by Charles Saatchi, whose purchasing habits are watched as a barometer of the market. When he buys, reputations are made and, as he strolled around the Art 98 fair, at the Business Design Centre in North London, he was being stalked by dealers.

Snell, whose work is on the Paton Gallery stand, was taken aback. "I was surprised he was interested in my work at all," she said.

Mr Saatchi's purchases included *Marking Time*, a field of dandelion seedheads with a military aircraft in the distance, and *Ground Clearance*, four military aircraft on the horizon with a ploughed field in the foreground. Her works range in price from £600 for a drawing to up to £5,000 for painting. Although the Saatchi name has become synonymous with controversy — notably the Chapman brothers' sculptures of prepubescent children and Damien Hirst's pickled animals — his taste is turning to the more traditional, such as Jenny Saville's unnerving nudes in the style of Lucien Freud that were shown in the Royal Academy's *Sensation* show.

"I think oil painting and landscapes are coming back," said Snell, who lists British painters such as Paul Nash among her influences. "Like everything, these things go in cycles. There's only so far you can shock people."

Snell, who lives in London and who was a runner-up for the NatWest prize last year, paints large-scale landscapes, often remote coastlines and rural views. She sometimes uses acrylic sand or wax to build up the surface.

Yesterday she recalled the struggle to survive in the two years after leaving art school in Norwich. "I was struggling financially to keep hold of a studio and keep on painting. I did come rather close to thinking I couldn't go on. I was horribly in debt and borrowed money. But then I got a residence at the Florence Trust and a free studio. It turned up at the right time."

Most of the dealers she approached would not even take a glimpse at her portfolio. "The main problem is getting them to look," she said.

Dealers rarely take on an artist without an introduction or recommendation. But, she said: "I had no connections. My only hope was to keep pushing." Her mother is a laboratory technician and her father an engineer. "I kept getting turned down. Most tell you to go away. They're not at all interested. It's such a cut-throat world." Although she contemplated giving up, she added: "I couldn't picture myself doing anything but painting. I wondered what job could I possibly do. The more rejected you get, the more determined you get to prove yourself."

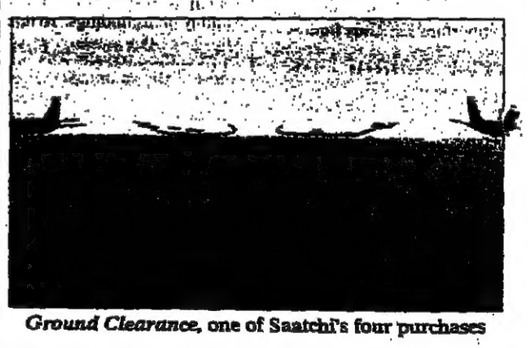
> ❛ Most dealers will tell you to go away. It's a cut-throat world ❜

Perseverance paid off when Graham Paton, who has a gallery in Hackney, East London, took her on. He describes her landscapes as some of the best he has seen in the past decade.

"They have a great sense of air and space." Seurat, he said, came to mind in "that kind of sharp editing and play of light".

Mr Paton, whose clients include the Metropolitan Museum in New York, recalled: "She sent me slides. I didn't look at them for weeks. Then I went through them, and thought, 'My God, these are good.' It was the first time in 17 years that I have found anything of high quality in unsolicited material."

The Art 98 fair ends tomorrow.



Ground Clearance, one of Saatchi's four purchases

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NEWS IN BRIEF

MP to pay wife £6,000 over sacking

Jimmy Wray, the Labour MP, was ordered to pay his estranged wife Catherine £6,089 after unfairly sacking her as his constituency secretary.

The Glasgow Baillieston MP had earlier claimed that she was waging a vendetta against him. At a hearing on January 7 Mr Wray, 63, a former boxer, said that his wife's employment had come to an end with the dissolution of Parliament. But yesterday a Glasgow industrial tribunal ruled that the work she was employed to do was secretarial and there was no evidence that her employment was anything than continuous.

Mr Wray revealed recently that his girlfriend, Laura Walker, was pregnant and they hoped to marry.

Spot checks start on car emissions

Police began roadside emission checks of vehicles in London amid protests from drivers. Similar tests will begin in Glasgow next month. Motorists found driving cars exceeding MoT emission limits were issued £60 fines which must be paid within 28 days. Those who do not pay the fine face court hearings and fines of up to £1,000.

Palace guard gets jail in drugs case

Private Matthew Diggle, 22, who admitted supplying Ecstasy and amphetamines which killed a comrade in the Royal Regiment of Wales during a break from guard duty at Buckingham Palace, was jailed for two years at Cardiff Crown Court. Russell Thomas, 30, of South Wales, who supplied both men with drugs, was jailed for 3½ years.

Bragg makes new religious series

Religious programmes could follow comedy panel shows and docu-soaps as television's latest growth area, as ITV plans to challenge the BBC's domination of the subject. In *Faith In Our Time*, a new series for LWT screened next month, the broadcaster Melvyn Bragg talks at length with six of Britain's most important religious figures.

Transplant boy back in hospital

Dean Watkins, an eight-year-old boy with a defective immune system who went home two weeks ago after months in hospital, has returned to an isolation ward after becoming seriously ill with chicken pox. Dean, of Swinton, Manchester, had a bone marrow transplant in July in the hope of curing his genetic disorder.

Director in lottery bribe case says he got £1.8m pay rise

By Joanna Bale

THE man accused of trying to bribe Richard Branson to withdraw a rival bid for the National Lottery has seen his salary rise from £1.2 million to £3 million since taking part in the winning bid, the High Court was told yesterday.

Guy Snowden, chairman of the American gaming firm GTech, which owns 22.5 per cent of Camelot, told the High Court yesterday that he was awarded the money because he "deserved it." George Carman, QC, cross-examining Mr Snowden, told the court that Camelot stands to make a profit of around £400 million to £500 million during its seven-year licence. He asked Mr Snowden: "You would accept, wouldn't you, that £400 million or £500 million might provide a lot of advantages to good causes?"

Mr Snowden replied: "We are already raising over £1.5 billion a year for good causes as it is."

When Mr Carman pointed out that Mr Branson would have donated it all to charity, Mr Snowden replied: "He can do with it whatever he wants.

"I have got my shareholders to pay. If Mr Branson wants to give it to charity or burn it, it doesn't matter to me." Mr Snowden had admitted to the court that he would have to resign as a director of Camelot if the jury found in favour of Mr Branson. Mr Carman had asked: "Can you conceive of any circumstances in which you think it would be proper to stay as a director of Camelot if the jury were to find that you had attempted to bribe Mr Branson?"

Mr Snowden, who became a director of Camelot after the alleged incident, said: "I think it would be unlikely."

> I have got shareholders. If Mr Branson wants to give it to charity or burn it, it doesn't matter to me

Mr Snowden admitted that a director of GTech, Carl Menges, was a personal friend of Peter Davies, the Director-General of Oflot, the lottery regulator, before the bid was awarded to Camelot. The court was told that Mr Menges's wife, Cordelia, was a close friend of Mr Davies's wife.

Earlier, describing the lunch in which the alleged bribe attempt took place in 1993, Mr Snowden said: "I attempted to explore with Mr Branson why he wanted to be in the lottery. I began to probe what his commercial motives might be. I said 'What's the real agenda here? What are you trying to accomplish here?' I wanted him to share with me what I suspected was some commercial tie-in with the lottery."

Richard Ferguson, QC for Mr Snowden, asked: "What was his reaction?" Mr Snowden: "I think I upset him." Mr Ferguson: "Can you remember what he said in response to that query?" Mr Snowden: "He said 'look, I'm a very charitable person'. He seemed to bristle at the prospect of my questioning his charitable nature, so I attempted to move on to see if there was anything else we could possibly do together.

"I said, what else can we do? He said he was a very successful man, and only needed to eat three times a day."

Mr Ferguson: "Did you say at any time, 'What can I do for you personally?' " Mr Snowden: "I was there to have a business discussion. In no way did I say personally."

In a two-way libel action, Mr Branson, 47, is suing Mr Snowden and GTech for saying that he lied about an attempted bribe. Mr Snowden, 52, is suing Mr Branson for alleging that he tried to bribe him. The action centres on a lunch at the Virgin boss's Holland Park home.

Mr Snowden said that he had accepted the invitation there because he wanted to meet Mr Branson, "a highly successful entrepreneur, daredevil billionaire publicist", as well as to communicate on the subject of lotteries, and to discover whether there were any commercial opportunities for their companies, especially the possibility of gaming on airlines.

Mr Carman accused Mr Snowden of "making up" the story about being interested in gaming on airlines "to try and cover up what was your real purpose in going to see Mr Branson that day".

Mr Snowden replied that gaming on airlines was "definitely in my mind".

The case continues.

Valerie Grove, page 21

ANDRE CAMARA

Guy Snowden outside the High Court yesterday: he says that the bribery claim is a lie

Murder trial told of row after sex

By Richard Duce

AN ACCOUNTANT accidentally slipped and died in her bathroom after a torrid love-making session, her alleged killer said yesterday.

Threatening letters written by Victor Farrant to Glenda Hoskins were no more than sexual fantasies played out by the couple during an on-off affair lasting three years, a Winchester Crown Court jury was told. "I would arrive as a stranger, she would read the note, none of us would speak and we'd end up having sex."

Mr Farrant, 48, was giving evidence of the affair with Mrs Hoskins, 45, at his trial for her murder and the attempted murder of Ann Fidler, a former civil servant who became a prostitute.

Mr Farrant said that in February 1996 he called at Mrs Hoskins's home in Port Solent, near Portsmouth, where they had made love before having a bath together. But a row broke out and, as he left the bathroom, he heard a bang and water splashing.

Mr Farrant said after he had dressed he found Mrs Hoskins's body in the bath. He tried to revive her and then put her body in the attic so her children would not find her.

Mr Farrant also denies the attempted murder of Mrs Fidler, who was found badly beaten in the kitchen of her home at Eastleigh, Hampshire, the previous December.

The trial continues.

Staghunt scientist admits his doubts

By Michael Hornsby, Agriculture Correspondent

THE scientist whose report on the stress suffered by hunted deer led to a National Trust ban on staghunting has admitted that some of his conclusions may have been wrong.

Patrick Bateson, an authority on animal behaviour at Cambridge University, has also accepted that further research is needed to test the validity of his findings. To this end a £75,000 study, funded by the Countryside Alliance and the Devon and Somerset Staghounds, is to be carried out by the Royal Veterinary College. It should be completed within six months.

The main aim will be to test claims in the Bateson report that hunted deer, even if they escape being shot, can suffer such severe muscle damage and abnormal changes in blood chemistry that they never fully recover and may die from muscle wastage.

In a letter published by *The Veterinary Record*, Professor Bateson accepts that his report cannot be "regarded as definitive" and that "some or all of the conclusions . . . may be qualified by future research".

The letter is co-signed by Douglas Wise, a veterinary scientist at Cambridge who has been one of Professor Bateson's sternest critics. Quoting criticism that the Bateson report "exaggerated the duration and degree" of suffering, it says that the changes in blood chemistry may be less of a "welfare problem" than supposed and that deer may recover rapidly from the stress of the chase.

However, the letter also says that criticism of the report would no longer be sustainable if it could be shown that hunted deer escape with severe muscle injury and breakdown of red blood cells sufficient to cause kidney damage.

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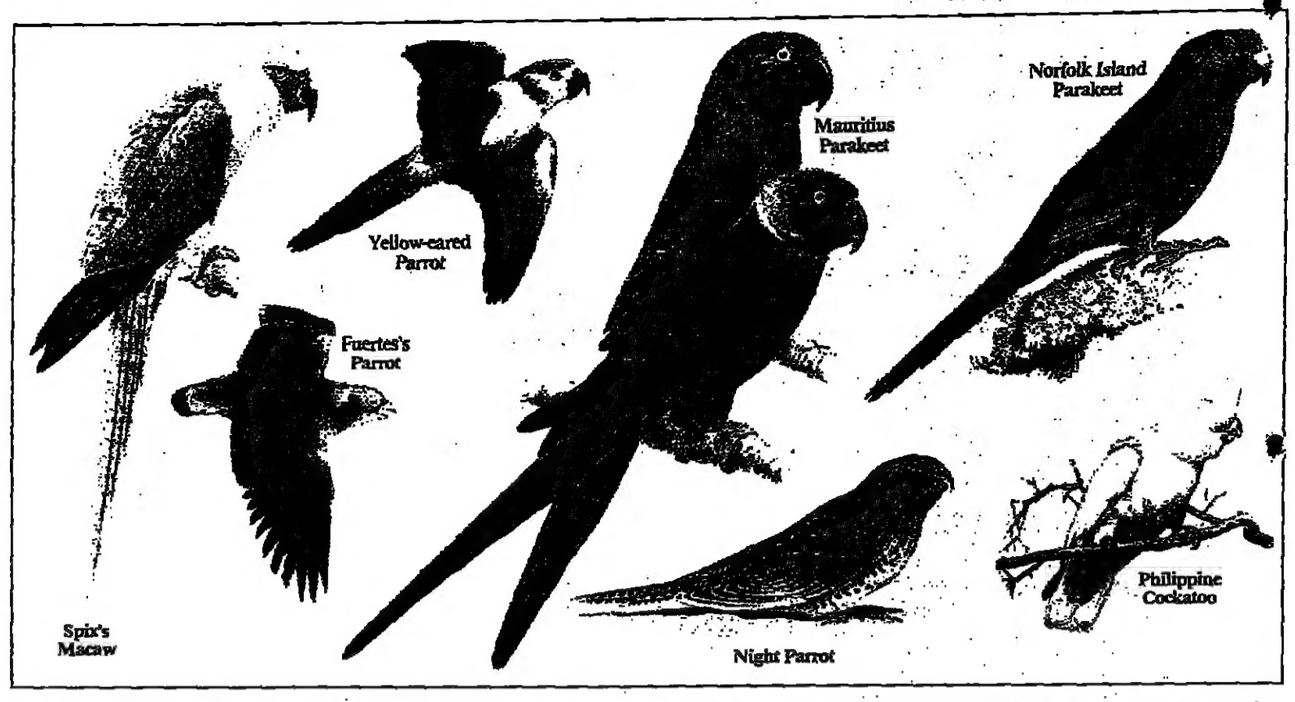
Quarter of parrot species face fight against extinction

'Jewels of the rainforest' are being wiped out before anything is known about them, writes Nick Nuttall



THE New Caledonian Lorikeet, a small green bird with violet-blue thighs and a yellow-tipped tail, may be the latest of the world's parrots to become extinct, experts said yesterday.

Tony Juniper, joint author of the most detailed report yet on the plight of the world's parrot species, said he feared it might have gone the way of the Norfolk Island Kaka, Newton's Parakeet and the Glaucous Macaw. "It hasn't been seen for over 20 years and we believe it may well be extinct," he said.

Mr Juniper said research showed that the New Caledonian Lorikeet, *Charmosyna diadema*, was unlikely to be the last parrot species to fall victim to persecution, habitat clearance, feral rats and cats and pet-trade trappers. "The parrots possess the largest number of threatened species of any bird family," he said.

The latest findings show that some 90 of the remaining 350 species are under threat of extinction with at least nine on the verge of extinction if not, like the New Caledonian species, already lost. Most of the losses over the past few centuries have been on islands in the Caribbean, Indian Ocean and, to a lesser extent, in the Pacific.

But the researcher said that extinctions were now also threatening the large continents such as South America, as the tropical rainforests are felled for agriculture, timber and development. Parrots, often occupying specific ecological niches, are especially vulnerable. "If you look at the way some of these birds are captured for the pet trade, it is not only damaging to individual birds but the species as a whole. Often trappers cut down trees to get at the babies. In the Caribbean in particular it is known that Jamaica's Amazonian Parrot is being hammered by the progressive loss of nesting holes which they traditionally use for years and years. So when some old bloke goes up there to chop down the trees, to get birds for a few dollars and a bottle of rum, these nesting holes are lost forever," Mr Juniper, the campaigns director of Friends of the Earth, said.

He said it was very sad that many of these parrot species were rapidly declining and lost before they could be properly studied by science. "Some of these are little birds, smaller than budgies, which are elusive. These little jewels live and feed on fruit and nectar in the roof of the forests and virtually nothing is known about them. Yet they are being wiped out before they have been much more than named." Mr Juniper's report is co-authored by Mike Parr, director of International Development with the American Bird Conservancy. Their research is published next week as *Parrots: A Guide to the Parrots of the World* by Pica Press.

Mr Juniper said they had drawn on the latest information of the status, ecology, observations and distribution of the world's parrots. They have also had access to thousands of skins and stuffed birds held mainly at the Smithsonian Institute in America and the Natural History Museum's Tring collection. Each species is illustrated in colour, often showing different colouring for young birds, birds on the wing and the different sexes.

Mr Juniper said one of the main reasons for the book was to act as a bible for customs and excise officers trying to spot illegal imports of protected species.

"The existing literature was not very good. Some customs officers were often using black and white photocopies. For a group of often highly coloured birds like this that's not really on," he said.

Mr Juniper, who helped track down the last wild living Spix's Macaw in Brazil, said traders and illegal importers often used tricks to smuggle pets into countries like Britain.

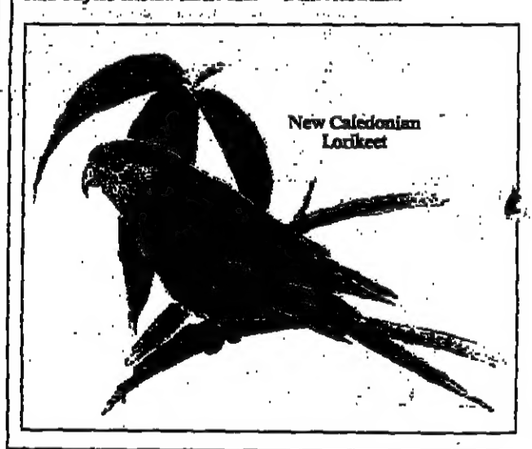
"Traders get a big box full of common species and then pop a few rare ones in. Some poor customs official, whose normal job is to try to spot someone with a crate of cocaine in his suitcase, is suddenly confronted with 300 screaming parrots. Without a proper reference, he is going to be unable to tell them apart," he said.

Other tricks, discovered at Rio de Janeiro's notorious Caxias market, are to use hair dyes to changes the colours of rare birds to look like common ones in which trade is permitted. Mr Juniper said he was not against parrots as pets but said buyers should insist that a bird is captive-bred rather than caught in the wild.

"Exported birds can die in transit and, when you get a wild one home, it is often as mad as a bat, never been tamed, doesn't eat properly and dies within weeks or months. Whereas a captive-bred one can be a charming companion. You may get them to speak and live for 100 years. It is a better outcome all round," he said.

Figures from the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions show that between 2,451 and 4,367 parrots were imported into Britain annually between 1993 and 1997. A spokeswoman for Customs and Excise said yesterday that officers were seizing up to 52 live birds a year from traders, smugglers and tourists. The new book might be useful in refining Green Parrot, a computer-based recognition system for rare birds used at Heathrow.

Under the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species, it is illegal to trade in rare parrots and their eggs. Three years ago a retired Welsh vet was fined £2,500, jailed for eight months and had assets worth £29,500 seized. He was using a network of couriers to bring in and incubate rare parrot eggs from Australia.



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Celtic muse could take priest to Eurovision

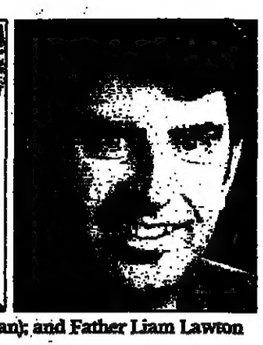
By Audrey Magee
Ireland Correspondent

A PRIEST is hoping to succeed where television's Father Ted failed by competing to become the first cleric to represent Ireland in the Eurovision Song Contest with one of his compositions.

Father Liam Lawton, Director of Music at Carlow Cathedral, takes his music seriously and rejects comparisons with the fictional Father Ted and Father Dougal who, in one episode of the Channel 4 comedy, dressed in sequins and sang *My Lovely Horse*, before losing out to rival priests.

Father Lawton, 36, wants to use the Eurovision contest in Birmingham, in May, to launch his musical career in Europe. He is among the finalists chosen for Eurosong, the national competition to be held in Dublin in March, which will decide who represents Ireland in the Eurovision contest. He has the approval of his bishop.

"I would love to represent my country, but I am delighted to get this far," said Father Lawton. "There is life after Eurosong."


Father Ted (Dermot Morgan); and Father Liam Lawton

On a year's leave from his post in the cathedral to concentrate on his musical career, Father Lawton says his composition, *Soel*, is a "Celtic, philosophical love story". The priest has been composing music for the past five years and is well known in church music circles. He writes in English and Irish, drawing on ancient prayers for inspiration. His music is comparable to the haunting Celtic spiritual sound of Enya, the acclaimed singer from Co Donegal. Father Lawton, originally from Co Offaly, will be joined on stage by his two brothers and by the Vard Sisters, whose album of religious songs, *Heavenly*, has gone platinum and who will sing lead vocals.

The priest has a strong chance of success as spiritual Celtic music has become immensely popular in Ireland since the Anuna choir accompanied Riverdance as they entertained the audience during the interval of the 1994 Eurovision Song Contest in Dublin. The toughest competition in March will come from Ronan Keating, the lead singer of Boyzone, who has written *Make the Change*. The broadcasting station RTE, which runs the competition in Ireland, insists that the panel that selected the songs for the national final did not know the identity of the composers or singers.

Ireland has won the competition seven times since it started in 1956. In view of the expense incurred by the winning country when it hosts the subsequent contest, there was relief last year when Ireland lost to Britain's Katrina and the Waves, singing *Love Shine a Light*.

There is already concern in RTE that Ireland might win again, landing the station with a bill of at least £5 million to host the 1999 competition. "The competition in Birmingham is on May 9," said an RTE spokeswoman. "It has been on May 9 twice before, and we won both times. It could be third time lucky — or not, depending on how you view things."

SOUTH WEST NEWS SERVICE

Michelle Aghaei, now recovered: "I thought I was going to be scarred forever"

Ms Aghaei's burnt face

Sunbed led to horrific burns

A WOMAN who suffered serious burns while lying on a faulty sunbed reluctantly accepted £1,700 compensation from an insurance company yesterday. The accident happened when Michelle Aghaei, 28, an insurance administrator, visited *Tanfast, in Bishopston, Bristol*. Her GP told her she had suffered first-degree burns.

Ms Aghaei, from Bradley Stoke, who had to cancel a Turkish holiday, said: "I thought I was going to be scarred forever. I didn't go out for three weeks. I was in absolute agony."

Mrs Bird ready to ruffle Tough Guys' feathers

By Kathryn Knight

FOR Jane Bird, it is all about conquering fear. "I am terrified of heights and you have to shin up a 30ft wall by rope and fling yourself over the other side before dropping into a pool of icy water."

Tomorrow morning, as the rest of the nation sleeps, the 50-year-old practice nurse will join 4,000 others on the Tough Guy Challenge. It is the third year she has entered, and this time her 25-year-old daughter will join her.

"Lots of people think it's the end of their life when they turn fifty, but if you keep fit and healthy it's just the beginning," she said. "I run a menopause clinic and I like to think I can inspire some of the women that I see there."

Jane Bird: undaunted by the cold and the mud

Designed and organised by Billy Wilson, a 68-year-old former Grenadier Guardsman, the race, via swamps, rivers of mud, barbed wire, rock faces and pits of fire, is designed for everyone from professional sportsmen to vicars, bankers and housewives who want to test themselves to the limit. Competitors will hurl themselves into freezing streams, crawl under nets of barbed wire, swim neck-high in mud and hurl themselves from rock faces into icy pools over the eight-mile course at Wolverhampton.

"It is absolutely hideous," Mrs Bird said. "If you're fit it's not difficult in terms of stamina, but what can be devastating is the cold. At points, when you've been wading chest high in freezing mud, you become totally numb. Someone was standing on my hand last year and I didn't notice."

After last year's event she was so covered in filth that she still could not hear when she got back to work on Monday. "My ears were totally blocked up with gunge. The other nurses at the practice thought it was absolutely foul."

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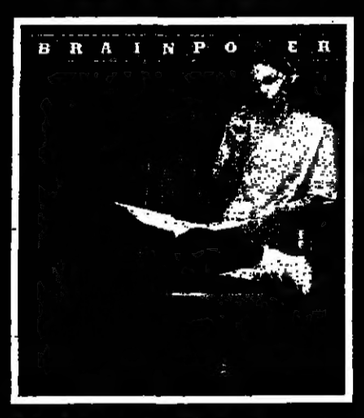

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Hague kills off the Young Conservatives

Nicholas Wood charts the rise and fall of a political nursery where a generation of Tories learnt their trade

WILLIAM HAGUE has decided to wind up the Young Conservatives, now a pale shadow of their 1950s' heyday as Middle England's marriage bureau and the nursery for a generation of Tory politicians from Baroness Chalker of Wallasey to John Major.

A report early next month on party reform will confirm proposals to abolish the group and replace it with a new body, Conservative Future, dedicated to recruiting young people.

Yesterday senior Tory officials conceded that they had abandoned the fight to keep the Young Conservatives afloat after years of damaging publicity centring on their dwindling numbers and their penchant for adopting increasingly odd causes.

One aide said that they had been sunk by their image of being a "bunch or political zealots or a bunch of anoraks".

He added: "Young people in their late teens or early 20s are not particularly attracted to becoming part of an organisation dominated by 14-year-olds in short, striped trousers."

The group, which once vied with the Scouts and the Guides as a national youth organisation, has declined steeply from a peak membership of 150,000 in the 1950s to probably fewer than 5,000 today. *The Times* disclosed just before the last election that only one member was left in Bristol. The organisation has also become a source of deep embarrassment to the party hierarchy. Its annual conference was cancelled in 1996, after years of increasingly bitter factional conflict in which the Maastricht treaty was torn up on stage in view of the cameras and rightwingers sported "Hang Nelson Mandela" badges.

Those in search of something starker than youthful high spirits were better off with the Federation of Conservative Students, which was shut down by Norman Tebbit a decade ago. After its riotous 1986 conference, the FCS was ordered to pay £1,400 to Loughborough University to compensate for damage done to the halls of residence.

> ❛ Young people today are not attracted to an organisation dominated by 14-year-olds in short, striped trousers ❜

In their salad days, shortly after they were created by Churchill in 1946, Young Conservatives favoured tennis and tea parties over politics. Around one third of the Tory MPs elected in 1992 began their political careers in this kindergarten. Mr Major met his first love, Jean Kiernans, while canvassing for the organisation. Mr Hague was a youthful chairman of the branch in Rotherham.

Sir Julian Critchley, the former Tory MP who led Hampstead Young Conservatives in the late 1940s, remembers a world of "handsome girls, extremely well brought up and all wearing Aertex shirts".

But by the 1980s, the organisation was in the grip of "political factions and oafish Scots". As the organisation became more ideological and young people found other more exciting outlets than ping-pong and whist drives, its popularity declined.

A social programme published in 1951 highlighted the innocent nature of the Young Conservatives' agenda. Mystery cycle tours, moonlight picnics, swimming galas, a trip to Epping Forest and a "strawberry and cream" flannel dance were among the attractions. They proved more enticing than the modern alternative of young men in suits debating railway privatisation.

The forthcoming report will propose that Conservative Future becomes an umbrella body for all Conservative members aged 31 and under. An annual youth conference would be revived and the new organisation would be composed of branches operating at local level.

A subsidiary organisation will operate on university campuses. Conservative Central Office plans to use the new central register of members to encourage young people to join the new body.

TIM BISHOP

Young Conservatives at their party conference in Eastbourne in 1992. The group had 150,000 members at its peak

Ex-cabbie tells MPs to sort out the cowboys

By James Landale
Political Reporter

THE first London taxi driver to become a Member of Parliament lived up to his trade's reputation for loquacity yesterday as the Commons backed moves to clamp down on "cowboy" minicabs.

Clive Efford, Labour MP for Eltham, spoke fluently for more than an hour in support of a backbench Bill to impose new regulations. The Private Hire Vehicles (London) Bill, introduced by Sir George Young, the former Tory Transport Secretary, was given an unopposed second reading. It has cross-party and Government support and is likely to become law.

It will end the anomaly under which London minicabs, unlike those outside the capital, have remained unregulated. Minicab firms and their drivers will have to obtain licences and their vehicles will be subjected to safety checks. They will not be allowed to tout for business on the streets.

The measure will not affect black taxis, which are regulated by the Public Carriage Office. It is aimed at improving safety and combating the number of attacks on women passengers in unregistered vehicles.

Mr Efford, who drove a black cab for 11 years before entering Parliament last summer, said that minicab drivers should be forced to take the geography test, known as the Knowledge, which all black-cab drivers must do before being allowed to work.

Mr Efford, who is still registered to drive a black cab, said there was a strong case for taxis to be built so that drivers were partitioned from passengers. He said 95 per cent of all attacks on drivers or passengers took place in non-purpose-built vehicles.

"I just want to correct one or two pieces of terminology," he told the House. "The punters are called squire or guv or love. The driver is usually the driver or cabbie and minicab drivers are called Rog." But he added: "In speaking on this Bill, I will attempt not to call you Guv'nor."

Sir George welcomed Mr Efford's speech, adding that his "new career as a Labour backbencher has probably deprived you of the opportunities you used to enjoy of giving us the benefit of your views on current affairs".

He said those who travelled in minicabs had no protection. "A man coming out of jail in the morning, having served a sentence for rape, can become a minicab driver in the afternoon."

Leak says council tax caps will stay

By Mark Henderson

AN END to council tax capping and the return of business rates to local control have been ruled out by the Government before its review of local government finance, a leaked document has revealed.

A letter from the Local Government Minister Hilary Armstrong to the Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott, leaked to *Local Government Chronicle*, shows that the Government plans to take no "extreme" measures under the review, and rejects ending capping or allowing councils to set their own business rates.

Consultation papers on the review are expected to be published next month, ahead of a White Paper in the summer.

"While we are seeking views on other people's proposals, we are not committed to any of them and ideas for more radical change are ruled out," Ms Armstrong wrote. "We should avoid boxing ourselves in too soon ... but we will need to make it clear that more extreme options are ruled out."

Ending capping was "not an option", and business rates would continue to be set nationally, although councils might be allowed to levy a small supplementary rate tied to council tax, which would remain as a "part property, part people" tax.

Paul Burstow, Liberal Democrat local government spokesman, said the leaked letter was the beginning of the end of close relations between Labour and local government. "The Government kept the local authorities onside by promising jam tomorrow, but we have just learned that jam is off the menu," he said.

Sir Norman Fowler, Shadow Environment Secretary, said the letter highlighted Labour "confusion and division" over local government.

Birth defect survey to cover 53,000 war veterans

By Michael Evans
Defence Correspondent

THE Government appealed yesterday for a speedy response to questionnaires being sent to 53,000 Gulf War veterans for research into the incidence of deformed babies.

The study, by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, is one of several into the illnesses affecting up to 6,000 veterans. It will focus on the reproductive health of the Gulf War personnel and the health of their children since the 1991 war with Iraq.

Yesterday John Reid, the Armed Forces Minister, said that all the men and women who served in the war would receive a questionnaire. It was vital that they were returned to the Ministry of Defence quickly so that researchers could compare the birth defect figures with those for control groups. Nothing could be learnt from the survey until all the responses had been received.

A number of veterans have claimed to have had deformed babies born as a result of their participation in the Gulf War. The survey is the only one to cover all those who served in the war, rather than sample groups. The questionnaires are being sent out at the rate of 5,000 a fortnight.

Dr Reid made his appeal at the launch of an Internet website — www.mod.uk/gulfwar/gvi.htm — to keep veterans up to date with the MoD's research. He said he hoped the new service would show that he was doing all that he could "to get to the bottom" of the illness mystery.

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Dalya Alberge on an intimate show of unseen works

A reflective Marthe in the 1921 oil painting, *The Vigil*. Pictures: *Private collection/ADAGP, Paris and Dacs, London*

MAGNUM

Pierre Bonnard, photographed by Henri Cartier-Bresson

Master and his ageless wife of bath

Masterpieces by the French artist Pierre Bonnard are to be exhibited for the first time in decades. Many have not been seen in public since they left his studio. Landscapes, still lifes and interiors have come from private collections around the world: tracking down owners and gently coaxing them into loaning their prized possessions is such a lengthy procedure that the retrospective, opening at the Tate Gallery next month, took five years to stage.

Among more than 100 paintings are a stunning series of intimate, sensuous nudes of Marthe, the woman he painted obsessively. They met in 1893 and married in 1925 but she never seemed to age in his portraits of her: in *The Bath* of 1925, she was in her mid-50s but appears to be 30 years younger.

The art historian Sarah Whitfield, curator of the exhibition, hopes that the range will elevate Bonnard (1867-1947) to his true position as "one of the greatest artists of the 20th century", a master of colour and light who was working in the tradition of Monet, Gauguin and Matisse.

While artists as diverse as Francis Bacon and Mark Rothko have been inspired by him, she feels that historians and critics have sometimes dismissed him as a "soft option because he did not really tackle the gritty issues of 20th-century art". Yet, she added: "He was very modern in that he was painting himself all the time. His paintings are about what he's surrounded by. A lot of artists see the world outside as if they're looking outside a window."

His portraits of Marthe "combine extreme sensuousness with rigorous compositional structure and a poignant vision of everyday life, to create pictures which are ravishing to look at and masterly commentaries on those aspects of life which are closest to us". From as far afield as Russia and Japan are three late "bath" paintings, from 1936 to 1946, which are being reunited for the first time since 1966. Bonnard's wife died in 1942. She didn't leave a will and he forged one. It was perfectly innocent, as he genuinely believed she had no family and under French law, she owned half his estate," Ms Whitfield said.

"After his death five years later, it was discovered that Marthe did have family who claimed half the estate." The case was not resolved until 1963.

☐ *The exhibition, sponsored by Ernst & Young, runs from February 12 to May 17. Admission: £7.*

Bathroom scene in the 1927 *Nude With Green Slipper*, painted when Marthe was in her mid-50s

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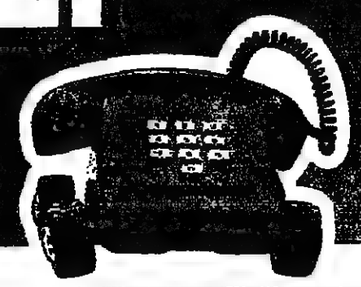

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THE WHITE HOUSE SCANDAL

I HAVE BEEN VINDICATED, SAYS GENNIFER FLOWERS

Former lover in return to centre stage

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

ARKANSAS AFFAIR

THE White House sex scandal engulfing Washington has refocused attention on Gennifer Flowers and an apparent inconsistency in President Clinton's versions of whether he had an affair with her.

Ms Flowers was the former cabaret singer whose allegations of a 12-year romance with Mr Clinton threatened to sink his presidential hopes in the early stages of the 1992 primary campaign. At the time, Mr Clinton denied an affair with her, though he did acknowledge "wrongdoing" and "causing pain" in his marriage.

But last Saturday, according to published reports, Mr Clinton admitted that he did have an affair with Ms Flowers during his sworn deposition in the sexual harassment case brought against him by Paula Jones.

Pressed to explain the seeming contradiction, Mike McCurry, the White House press secretary, gave a carefully phrased reply: "The President knows he told the truth in 1992 when he was asked about that relationship and he knows that he testified truthfully on Saturday, and he knows his answers are not at odds."

Mr McCurry refused to offer any further clarification, despite a barrage of questions from baffled reporters. But other sources suggested that Mr Clinton, who is a lawyer, may have found a form of words than enabled him to give technically correct answers in both cases.

Ms Flowers, feeling vindicated at last, has been drawing attention to damaging similarities between her case and the accusations involving Monica Lewinsky's relationship with the President. She has said that Mr Clinton urged her to lie about their relationship, as has been alleged in the Lewinsky case.

In 1992, Ms Flowers released a tape of a phone call that sounded unmistakably like Mr Clinton, who said: "I think if everybody's on record denying it, you've got no problem. They can't run a story like this unless somebody said, 'Yeah, I did it with him'."

Ms Flowers said that Mr Clinton also helped her to get a state job in Arkansas while he was Governor by enlisting a confidant to make the necessary arrangements. In the Lewinsky case, Vernon Jordan, a trusted Clinton friend and adviser, used his clout to arrange job interviews for her in New York.

In Ms Flowers's tape, the Clinton voice told her to cover up his role in helping her to get a state job. It said: "If they ever ask if you've talked to me about it, you can say no."

Appearing on American television yesterday, Ms Flowers said she was not surprised that Mr Clinton had allegedly told Ms Lewinsky to cover up their affair. "I believe that Bill will do what he needs to do to protect his power structure and I believe the people that surround him will lie as well," she said. She described Mr Clinton as "a very sexual man with a healthy sexual appetite", adding that she had predicted he would not be able to stop seeing other women. It was extremely unfortunate, she added, that the latest episode involved a 24-year-old who would probably find it hard to deal with at such a young age. "I imagine her initial reaction would be to help to protect him," Ms Flowers said. "How long that will last we'll just have to wait and see."

Ms Flowers said it was hard to believe that Mr Clinton had finally confessed to their affair. She was also surprised that the President had allegedly left messages on Ms Lewinsky's answering machine. She described that as a foolish act, given the scandals of his presidency. "You'd think the boy would learn," she said.

Ms Flowers made money through selling her story to a supermarket tabloid, followed by a book and a nightclub act that traded on her notoriety.

MIKE NELSON / EPA

Gennifer Flowers promoting her book in 1995 in which she described a 12-year affair with Bill Clinton while he was Governor of Arkansas

Press pack turns its fire on former friend

BY TUNKU VARADARAJAN

MEDIA

PRESIDENT CLINTON has scarcely a friend left among America's tribe of journalists and leader writers.

Mordant editorials, merciless columns and hectares of newsprint speak of his "impending demise", "worst nightmare", "Waterloo" and "come-uppance". Even his dearest friends in the newspaper world, the arch-liberal leader writers of *The New York Times*, are now unsparing. "Tell the full story, Mr President," said the paper's main editorial yesterday.

Fastening on to the fact that Mr Clinton's denials have been so carefully worded, the editorial said: "This approach, which depends so heavily on omission and factual elision, is appropriate to people who believe themselves to be targets of a criminal investigation. But it is not sufficient for Mr Clinton's other role as leader of the nation." It calls for a "complete factual account".

The *New York Post* stated bluntly: "If he has committed perjury or suborned perjury in others, it is the constitutional duty of the House of Representatives to undertake the determination of whether he has committed the 'high crimes and misdemeanours' that merit his impeachment."

The Wall Street Journal, never overly fond of Mr Clinton, declared gleefully that the President "is about to enter into that same land recently visited by .... Mike Tyson". Editorial knives were out, too, in Middle America. "Let the chips fall," said *The News & Observer*, of Raleigh, North Carolina: "If [Mr Clinton] has not told the truth he must face the consequences, and they will be harsh, possibly mortal to his presidency."

The Hartford Courant, in Connecticut, said that Mr Clinton was "on the brink of disaster", his "presidency hurtling towards the abyss". *The Commercial Appeal*, of Memphis, said that while "nothing has been proved", every new revelation about his personal conduct make it "harder even for longtime supporters to give him the benefit of the doubt".

Mountain of paper may hold answers

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

EVIDENCE

ANALYSTS say that one reason the present scandal will not go away is that the location of the alleged affair at the heart of the White House means that there is a mass of hard evidence available to investigators.

The most controversial are the tapes of conversations between Monica Lewinsky and her friend, Linda Tripp, with Ms Lewinsky's assertion: "I have lied my entire life".

The real investigative paper chase begins, however, with detailed Secret Service logs of comings and goings at the White House, recording anyone passing through the gates and, separately, anyone visiting the Oval Office. White House officials said yesterday visits by Ms Lewinsky could be explained by her friendship with Betty Currie, President Clinton's personal secretary.

Kenneth Starr, the Whitewater special prosecutor, has also demanded telephone logs of calls to and from Mr Clinton's office. Potentially explosive evidence could lie in the White House messenger receipts. According to reports, these show that Ms Lewinsky sent packages to the White House on nine occasions between October 7 and December 8, 1997, giving Ms Currie's number as the contact.

These could provide tough questions that the President and White House will have to answer in detail.

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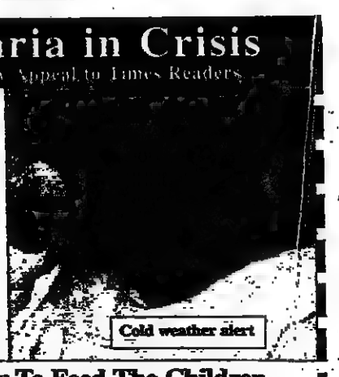
Bulgaria in Crisis

Emergency Appeal to Times Readers

LEFT TO FREEZE

Children like Yordan, 1½, already malnourished could die from cold and hunger this January unless aid reaches them now. With temperatures plummeting to –15° Yordan's scant clothing and no shoes offer him little protection from the bitter cold and there is no money to heat his orphanage. There are 37,000 places in Bulgaria's orphanages.



Cold weather alert

No Money To Feed The Children
No Money To Heat The Orphanages

Bulgaria is a country in the midst of a serious economic crisis. Now thousands of children are suffering terribly as winter reaches its coldest point. Urgent help is needed.

There is little money to heat the orphanages. Orphanage Directors are having to beg for food from local villages and rarely know where the next meal is coming from. In some areas children, like Yordan, are going hungry and the cold could prove fatal for many children this winter. Without aid this could be catastrophic for Bulgaria's orphanage children.

The European Children's Trust, sister charity of The Romanian Orphanage Trust, is ready to distribute emergency food packs, clothes and fuel to the orphanages in most need.

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The European Children's Trust

Please act NOW – winter is here

هكذا من الأصل

HOW YOUNG ASSISTANT GOT CLOSE TO THE PRESIDENT

THE WHITE HOUSE SCANDAL

Sponsor smoothed way to the corridors of power

By Ian Brodie

MONICA LEWINSKY was recommended for her job as a White House trainee by one of President Clinton's major campaign contributors.

He was identified yesterday as Walter Kaye, a retired New York City insurance executive who contributed $347,000 (£210,000) to the Democratic National Committee and Democratic candidates. He was one of those rewarded for their generosity by an invitation from Mr Clinton to stay as an overnight guest in the White House.

Mr Kaye was also a friend of Ms Lewinsky's mother, Marcia Lewis, an author, and helped to make the connection for her daughter to be taken on at the White House. In addition to his party contributions, Mr Kaye also subscribed to Mr Clinton's legal defence fund and to another fund established to help Susan McDougal, the Clintons' former business partner, according to *The New York Times*. The report said Mr Kaye was close to Hillary Clinton. It also said that Kenneth Starr, the Whitewater special prosecutor, had questioned Mr Kaye about his interest in Ms McDougal, who was convicted of fraud for her role in the Whitewater affair. She was also jailed for contempt for refusing to testify to a grand jury about whether Mr Clinton had lied in his videotaped testimony at her trial.

It is not unusual for wealthy contributors to recommend young men and women, either their own children or those of friends, to the choice posts as White House trainees.

Ms Lewinsky was one of 250 to be selected from 1,500 applicants and then had the further good fortune to be assigned to the West Wing of the White House where the President and other top officials work. The majority of internships (traineeships) are not in the White House itself but in the neighbouring Old Executive Office Building.

LEWINSKY

Ms Lewinsky worked for Leon Panetta, then the President's chief of staff. Her duties covered answering telephones, handling faxes, making copies, fetching coffee and delivering mail to the Oval Office and elsewhere.

Intern work is unpaid but offers a fascinating political insight for those who are willing to put in long hours and work hard. On an average day there are 250 interns in the White House between the ages of 18 and 23. The jobs last only from three to four months. Many are still at university or have just finished. The intern culture is widespread throughout Washington institutions. Competition can be cut-throat, with much jostling for position and trying to get noticed by the boss. Although some positions offer a small stipend, the cost of living falls heavily on the students, or their parents and can be a strain. Ms Lewinsky was one of the luckiest in that she obtained a paid job in the White House when her time was up. Four months after that she was moved to a secretarial job at the Pentagon after complaints that she spent too much time attending White House events where Mr Clinton appeared. By then, she had reportedly already bought gifts for the President, including ties, and some Clinton aides were nervous about her.

Ms Lewinsky's mother is the author of *The Private Lives of the Three Tenors*, a kiss-and-tell book about the opera stars Luciano Pavarotti, Plácido Domingo and José Carreras.

White House internships start with a day-long orientation that includes a briefing from Secret Service agents on security issues and behaviour around the President and other officials.

"They basically scare you out of doing what you're not supposed to do," one intern said.

Clinton gives US a laugh

THE American airwaves have been bombarded with caustic and mocking comments. "So this is Day Two of Jailbait-gate for President Clinton or, as they're calling him now, the Umabanger," said Jay Leno, host of *The Tonight Show*. Leno also suggested that Hillary Clinton, who wrote a book about helping children, called *It Takes a Village*, should pen a sequel, *It Takes a Village to Keep an Eye on My Husband*. On the Internet, the material is even more salacious.

President Clinton poses with the 1995 class of interns, of which there are generally about 250 working for brief periods in the White House. Monica Lewinsky is arrowed

THE COLD WAR HOT OFF THE PRESS

Hot off the press this week, the secrets of MI5 and MI6 have been published for the first time in two opening volumes of an impressive new series of Documents on British Policy Overseas since the 1960's.

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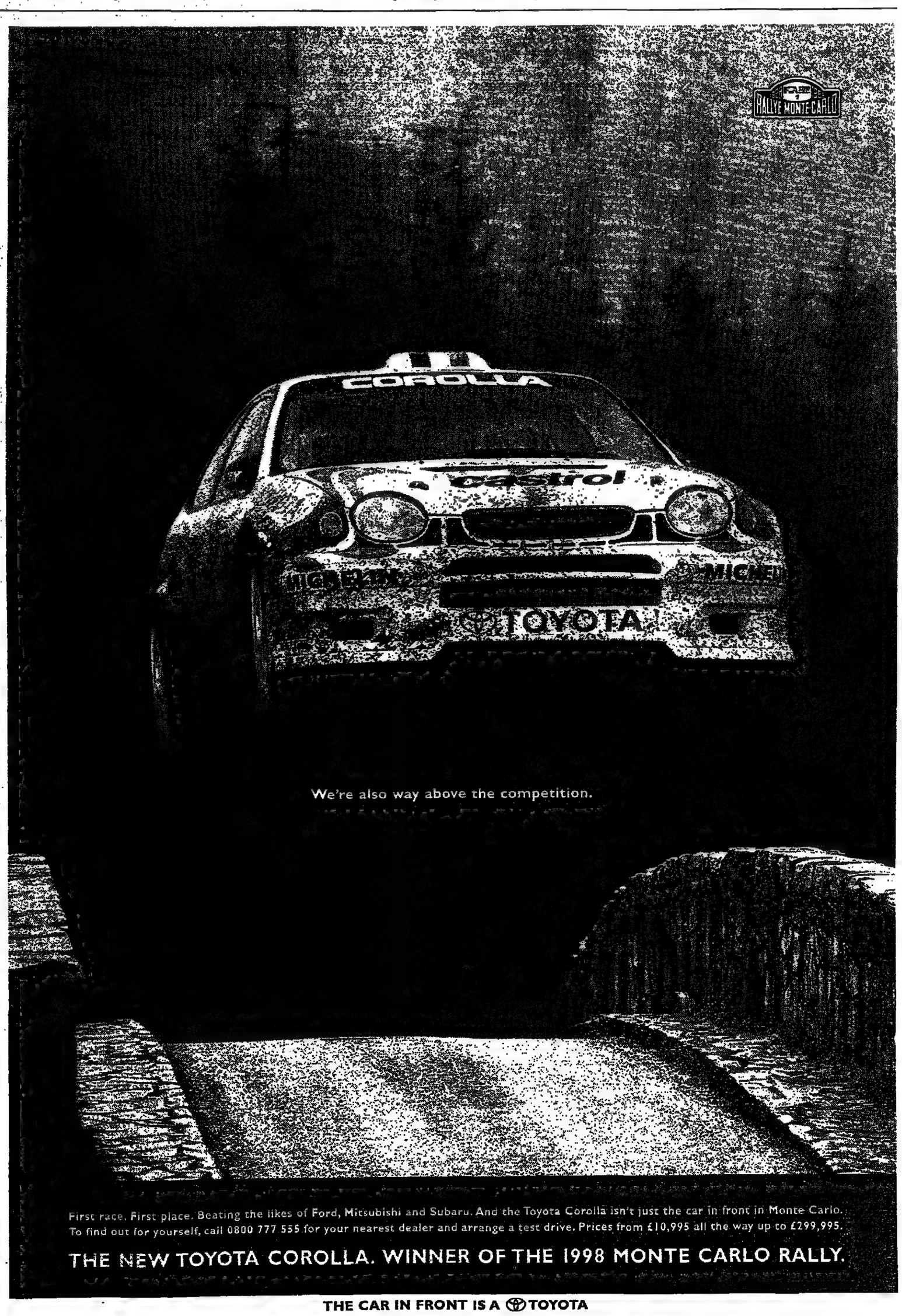

هكذا من الإصل

Allen: ambivalent about his new role

Woody goes back to court

WOODY ALLEN was back before a judge this week at the same New York courthouse where he fought his bitter custody battle with Mia Farrow. This time, however, the newly wed writer-director will be dealing with other people's woes. He was called for jury service.

Asked how he felt about becoming a juror, Allen told the judge: "Ambivalent." That prompted another juror to raise her hand and declare: "I feel that way too." The judge was having none of it. "Are we all going to be ambivalent?" he asked.

☐ New Yorkers are always looking for more living space. A friend's neighbours in an Upper West Side apartment building made her a large cash offer for her two walk-in cupboards. Desperate for space, they wanted to knock down a common wall so they could use them.

Heart-throb dances to music of time

JAMES BONE'S NEW YORK

MIKHAIL BARYSHNIKOV is giving New York audiences a unique opportunity to take his pulse as he turns 50 on Tuesday. The ballet superstar, making his first solo appearance in America since his leap over the Iron Curtain in 1974, is performing an extraordinary piece in which an electronic stethoscope amplifies his heartbeat as he dances.

On the opening night at Manhattan's City Centre on Wednesday, the rapid thudding provided the only background music as Baryshnikov paced, jogged, boogied, pirouetted and even tap-danced to the rhythm of his own heart. The dancer's most vital organ pumped at up to 150 beats a minute during Sara Rudner and Christopher Janney's avantgarde *Heartbeat: mb*.

Perhaps the choreographers would have been better-advised to attach sensors to some of the excited middle-aged women in the overwhelmingly female audience. The impish Misha set their hearts racing faster than his own. In his middle age, Baryshnikov is still a heart-throb.

Backstage after the show, he confessed that he found it scary to dance in time to his heart, and that it made him conscious of his own mortality. These days he lives a quiet life in a small town overlooking the Hudson River just north of New York City with his wife, Lisa Rinehart, a former ballerina, and their three small children. (He also has an older daughter, who lives with her mother, the actress Jessica Lange).

The household has just acquired a third dog, a boxer called Maggie. He has also become a fanatical golfer, and his graceful swing is said to be something to behold. Just back from his first trip to Russia and his native Latvia since his defection from the Soviet Union, Baryshnikov is far from pleased to be hitting on Tuesday what Americans like to call "nifty fifty".

Baryshnikov: filled with foreboding at 50

He never celebrates his birthdays, and this one in particular fills him with foreboding. His black mood — perhaps a lingering Russian characteristic — is not helped by the fact that he is mourning the recent death of his American benefactor, Howard Gilman, the paper magnate.

"It's very much the end of my life," he laments. "I believe in genetics, and my mother died when she was 40. It's a bit scary, but I don't think I'm going to hit 60."

☐ The New York naturalist Bill McKibben, who lives upstate in the Adirondack Mountains, is calling for a voluntary moratorium on wildlife photography. He says it exploits animals and compares it to pornography.

JILLY WENDELL

Peter Baxter, who went from a Cotswolds village to take on US stars

Film loser outdraws Sundance

DENIZENS of the film industry who flocked to Robert Redford's Sundance film festival this week found a young British producer starring as enfant terrible.

Peter Baxter, 32, from the Cotswolds village of Poulton, is the co-founder and executive director of a rebel festival known as Slamdance, which is held alongside Redford's event in Park City, Utah.

Mr Baxter, who lives in Los Angeles, founded Slamdance after his own film, *Loser*, was rejected for Redford's competition in 1995. Mr Baxter did not remain a loser for long, however. The festival quickly became hot in Hollywood. *Loser* secured a US distribution deal, and the next year's Slamdance winner, *Day Trippers*, went on to Cannes and won at Deauville.

This year, the festival had 1,300 entries for its 31 slots; won a rave review from the *Los Angeles Times*; and a host of industry bigwigs turned up. The Slamdance crowd are now firmly ensconced on Main Street — while Sundance has had to move to a ski area outside town.

☐ Since the Louise Woodward baby-battering case, there has been a rash of "nanny-snatching" in America. The latest case is Molly Reinig, 27, who has defected from the Washington couple Al Hunt, *The Wall Street Journal's* bureau chief, and Judy Woodruff, a CNN newscaster, for Hollywood. Ms Reinig's new employers will be the film stars Alec Baldwin and his wife Kim Basinger. The Hunt-Woodruff household has one nanny for three children. The new establishment has two for one two-year-old girl.

Inspectors say Iraq in warlike mood

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

UNITED NATIONS weapons inspectors fear that Iraqi defiance may spell the beginning of the end of their mission to track down President Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction.

A UN delegation, back in New York after crisis talks in Baghdad, said that Tariq Aziz, Iraq's negotiator and Deputy Prime Minister, was in a more aggressive mood than at any time since the end of the Gulf War in 1991.

Richard Butler, the chairman of the UN Special Commission on Iraq (Unscom), told the UN Security Council yesterday that his delegation's talks with Mr Aziz had been disturbing. He said: "The talks were characterised by: extended statements by the Iraqi side to which no remotely equal reply was invited, accepted or apparently wanted; moments of abuse of Unscom and its professional officers; an attempt to apportion literally all blame to Unscom, past and present.

"The Deputy Prime Minister said that the Government of Iraq was working with the commission in order to get sanctions lifted," Mr Butler went on. "If there was no prospect of this, Iraq had no intention of continuing to work with the commission. Iraq was ready to face the consequences, including war."

In the face of Iraq's intransigence, Britain is expected to seek a new Security Council resolution renewing the original authorisation for the use of force by the anti-Iraq coalition in the Gulf War.

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Our man would still recognise Havana

The five-day papal visit has revived capitalist instincts among Cubans in the island's capital, writes **Tom Rhodes** in Havana

ROOM 501 at the Sevilla, once Cuba's most respected hotel, is a nondescript shadow of the suite where Wormald was recruited by the British Secret Service in Graham Greene's *Our Man In Havana*: There is no sitting room, as the novel describes, and the chamber, with its twin beds, pictures of flowers and small bathroom, is much like any other at the hotel, once home to Mafia bosses and Hollywood's rich and famous.

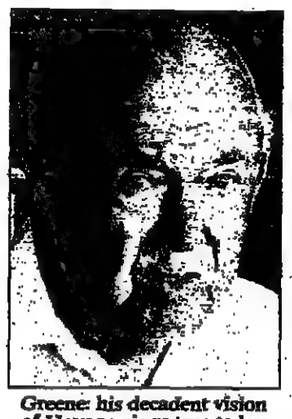
During a week in which the Pope has offered the most public criticism of declining morality in Cuba, however, Greene's 40-year-old portrait of Havana's pre-revolutionary decadence has come full circle. The joke among Cubans now is that, in the days of a crippling United States embargo against Havana, sex is the only commodity that President Castro cannot ration.

During this first papal visit to the Caribbean nation, it has become clear that, just as the public rooms of the Sevilla have been restored to their former glory, so prostitutes have returned to haunt El Comandante's Communist regime as never before. In a throwback to the pre-Castro days when Havana was a sensual playground run by the mob, they sashay in figure-hugging lycra down La Rampa and the Malecón, the seaside promenade, offering their services to every foreigner in sight.

The Sevilla no longer attracts luminaries such as the Hollywood actors Merle Oberon, Errol Flynn and Gloria Swanson. It is no longer the illegal gambling base for the Batista regime, but it, and other less traditional blocks, are now the mainstay of an annual $1 billion (£600 million) tourist economy that demonstrates clearly, in what are assumed to be the final years of Señor Castro, that Cuba has been forced to sell its socialist soul for sun, sand and sex.

Jim Wormald, Greene's fictional vacuum-cleaner salesman who became Agent 59200/5, MI6's man in Havana, could so easily have described the scene last night along the Paseo, the main thoroughfare behind the Sevilla.

All down the Paseo, at intervals of a few yards, the pimps accosted him automatically. "Can I be of service, sir?" "I know all the beautiful girls." "You desire a beautiful woman?" ... In their eyes, he never became a resident: he remained a permanent tourist.



Greene: his decadent vision of Havana rings true today

The Tropicana nightclub, in which Wormald celebrated his daughter's 17th birthday, remains flamboyant. But today, for a substantial fee, the troupes of statuesque, near-naked women who parade down its aisles are said to be "available" after hours to the highest bidder.

Wormald, who files bogus encoded reports to London using Lamb's *Tales From Shakespeare* and dreams up military installations from vacuum-cleaner parts, paints a portrait of corruption and repression that echoes the lifestyle and human rights abuses of Señor Castro and his cronies.

"*Catholics are more torturable than Protestants, just as they are more criminal*," Captain Segura, the police chief, tells Wormald over a game of chequers at the Havana Club. "*One reason the West hates the great Communist states is that they don't recognise class distinctions. Nobody cares what goes on in our prisons.*"

Since the dollar was made legal tender five years ago, for the first time since Señor Castro toppled Batista in 1959, it has become the only currency of value. All but the dollar shops are bare, and for tourists at least the Cuban peso is a rarely seen abstract denomination.

Despite the Pope's stern warnings of moral decay, his visit has been viewed by many Cubans simply as another excuse to promote their capitalist instincts and exploit the influx of foreigners. From cigar sales to papal trinkets: from rides in post-Second World War American cars, to hiked-up fees for hotel rooms and telephone bills, it has been estimated that the five-day tour, which ends tomorrow night, will generate $25 million for the Cuban economy.

A cocktail at El Floridita, Ernest Hemingway's daiquiri bar, costs half the $11 monthly wage for an average Cuban and Ana, one of the many prostitutes who stalk Havana's old town, had no illusions of any religious revival. "Normally I charge $50 for a trick," she said. "But this week it's $100, a special rate for the event."

"In many ways it really is like the days before the revolution," said one of the Foreign Office's men in Havana over breakfast at the Sevilla yesterday. "The system isn't working and people are waiting for something to happen — they are just not quite sure what that is."

COLUMBIA PICTURES

Alec Guinness, as Wormald, with Jo Morrow in the 1959 film version of *Our Man in Havana*. The city has since come full circle

Bemused Cubans enjoy papal carnival

FROM REUTERS IN CAMAGÜEY

AGAINST a backdrop of palm trees and Soviet-style high-rise blocks, thousands of people flocked to the Pope's second Mass in communist Cuba yesterday, but many seemed more bemused and curious than filled with religious fervor.

As the Pontiff arrived for the Mass in the central city of Camagüey, the local church choir gave some last-minute practice to hymns — twist set to tropical dance rhythms — next to a bright pink altar built for the occasion. Adding a further dab of the Caribbean to the stage, a white canopy decorated with large green leaves fluttered over the altar. "Christ invites you all to celebrate with him today," boomed a choir leader on stage, to the astonishment of many streaming into the square, whose only previous experience of mass meetings were those run by the Communist Party.

"Last time I was here was for the anniversary of the battle of Moncada barracks," said Mario Ibáñez, a sugar worker, referring to the annual celebration of the Cuban revolutionaries' first, and unsuccessful, assault in 1953 on Fulgencio Batista, the former dictator.

"I don't really know what all this is about today, but I have heard the Pope is a good man, and we are happy to be here," he added. Señor Ibáñez and his family, like many others, cycled into Camagüey around dawn from a village on the plains outside this city of 300,000 people.

Others came on horse-drawn carts, or walked. A privileged few drove to the Mass site, mainly in battered-looking US-made cars dating from before Cuba's 1959 revolution, or dour Soviet-made Ladas imported after the US economic embargo was imposed in 1962.

The local Communist Party hierarchy, which has enthusiastically heeded President Castro's call to ensure a good turnout, was also bringing in people on special trains and buses. At Revolution Square, where the altar stood in the shadow of a huge black-and-grey monument to the 19th-century independence hero Ignacio Agromonte, those arriving early waved Cuban and Vatican flags side-by-side. Groups of pilgrims from Mexico and California joined in the singing.

Behind the altar, a Spanish-made lift was in place to carry the frail 77-year-old Pontiff up to his chair. Local workers have even constructed a special sofa for his few seconds in the elevator. "What is happening today with the Pope's coming helps us to reaffirm our faith. This visit was long overdue," said Manuel Saavedra, 58, handing out free flags to the crowd. Asked how he had maintained his faith under an atheistic state, the church worker glanced at security guards near by and said: "These things are difficult to talk about. Just look and understand."

In shabby tower blocks around the edges of the square — where a crowd of 150,000 had been expected for the Mass — residents stood at their windows to enjoy a bird's eye view.

Dollar-only shops for tourists and journalists in Camagüey were doing a brisk trade in papal T-shirts and baseball caps. There were, however, no such trinkets on offer to poorer Cubans.

WORLD IN BRIEF

Gunmen free 23 in cells

São Paulo: Ten men with automatic weapons set free 23 detainees at a police station yesterday before being involved in a shootout with patrol car officers in which one person was killed, police in the Brazilian city said.

The gunmen tied up all police officers in the building before making off with the prisoners. An undetermined number of escapees were recaptured. There were 132 detainees in the police station at the time of the attack. *(AFP)*

HIV sex ruling

Orlando: Jerrime Day, 20, who admitted having sex with a girl, 16, without telling her he was HIV-positive, has been ordered to get written consent from future sex partners and show the form, signed in front of witnesses, to his Florida probation officer before intercourse. The probation period lasts 9½ months. *(AP)*

Punjab collision

Islamabad: At least 24 people were believed killed and 50 injured in a crash involving a crowded bus in northern Pakistan. Two private vehicles were reportedly in a race when they collided with the oncoming bus. The accident happened at Narowal, about 75 miles north of the Punjab capital, Lahore. *(Reuters)*

Protester dies

Rome: Alfredo Ormando, 40, a Sicilian who set himself on fire at the Vatican nine days ago, has died after suffering severe burns over 90 per cent of his body. In a suicide note, Ormando reproached his family and society in general for failing to understand his homosexuality. *(AFP)*

Clicky divorce

Jerusalem: Soon the simplest way to file for divorce in Israel could be clicking a computer button to access the Internet, *Yediot Ahranot* said. Rabbinical courts are fusing the law and technology. *(AP)*

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Sunlounger stereotypes still on the march

The 'beach-towel dictators' think the Brits are polite and chaotic, **Roger Boyes** reports from Bonn

THE British are sticking stubbornly to their hostile stereotypes of Germans as an aggressive, humourless race determined to park beach towels on poolside sunbeds. That is the thrust of a report in the February edition of *Psychologie Heute* (Psychology Today), drawing on German and British research.

The German view of the British is more charitable, says the author Baerbel Kerber; they are seen as "polite, conservative and chaotic".

But it is precisely this politeness that seems to be baffling many German visitors. Stefan Schmid, of Regensburg University, has started a project to prepare exchange students for the rigours of a stay in Britain.

After debriefing returning students, he concluded that British bosses rarely utter a direct order but phrase their wishes with elaborate courtesy, leaving German employees in the dark. This apparent courtesy often coincides with equally treacherous informality. "The English shift quickly to first names but this stops a long way short of friendship," says *Psychologie Heute*. "Germans frequently mistook pure politeness for genuine interest." Shaking hands can be a problem too — a normal greeting for Germans, something exceptional for the British. British informality often conceals rather rigid conventions. Workplace dress codes, although unstated, can be strict.

The debriefing revealed that "the Second World War is still a theme in Britain, and Germans are even today presented as aggressive". One trainee heard the following from an Englishman during a business meeting: "In the old days you took us on with guns and we beat you. Now you're coming with briefcases and we don't stand a chance."

The British, says the report, are wedded to their stereotypes, even though some — for example, German workers performing with the industry of ants — have long lost validity. But beach-towel jokes continue to merit serious study in Germany. Perhaps the greatest expert on the genre is Professor Harald Husemann, of the University of Osnabrück. "The beach towel," he says, "has become a symbol of the dominance and assertiveness of the Germans." The jokes cloak "British envy that the Germans are faster and more efficient, even as tourists".

The way to break down these stereotypes, say academics quoted by *Psychologie Heute*, is to increase youth exchanges. A survey for the Goethe Institute divided 1,300 British pupils aged 14-16 into four groups according to their intensity of contact with Germany and the German language. Those who had visited Germany said the people were friendly, polite and hardworking. Those who had not saw them as arrogant and nationalistic. All groups scored well on German geography. Most had problems, however, naming the German Chancellor — variations of Helmut Kohl included Hermit Cole and Helmet Coal. Hitler was also identified as the German leader.

Sport coloured most youngsters' views. One boy asked to name ten famous Germans came unstuck after three: "Hitler, Klinsmann, Matthäus. Don't know any other footballer." Jürgen Klinsmann, now back with Tottenham Hotspur and scoring goals, is still considered by many academics to be the best single hope for improving the German image — largely because he is seen as modest and witty.

Prejudice can be led from above. Many German doctoral dissertations have been written about the "Nicholas Ridley affair" — his 1990 interview in *The Spectator* when he declared European monetary policy a "German racket designed to take over the whole of Europe".

Germans are concerned that Margaret Thatcher's deeply sceptical attitude towards German unification, and the tabloid press, eroded the work of decades in chipping away ethnic clichés. The famous 1990 Chequers memorandum listed her perceptions of German weaknesses: insensitivity, self-obsession, self-pity, angst, assertiveness, bullying, egotism and sentimentality. In German diplomats, committed to keeping alive some form of positive image, this generates ... self-pity, angst, assertiveness and self-obsession. It is thus difficult to break out of the cycle.

Garland's 1990 *Spectator* cartoon of Helmut Kohl with a Hitler moustache created uproar in Germany. Bill Caldwell, in the *Daily Star*, enjoyed the poolside battles

TOP GERMANS

The ten most famous Germans, by British schoolchildren

1 Adolf Hitler (68%)
2 Jürgen Klinsmann (47)
3 Boris Becker (40)
4 Steffi Graf (37)
5 Michael Schumacher (33)
6 Beethoven (16)
7 Lothar Matthäus (15)
8 Albert Einstein (11)
9 Michael Stich (9)
10 Joseph Goebbels (9)

Seoul jet was spying, Russia air chief says

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

THE newly appointed chief of the Russian Air Force has admitted he was the commander who ordered the shooting down of a Korean airliner in 1983 with the loss of 269 passengers and crew.

General Anatoli Kornukov, who was promoted to his post by President Yeltsin on Tuesday, said that he had no regrets about the incident. He remained convinced that the ill-fated KAL Boeing 747 was on a spying mission when it strayed into Soviet airspace over the northern Pacific.

"I do not regret this fact of my life and, if something like that happened now, I would act in the same way," he said in a television interview.

The former head of a Soviet fighter command division in the Far East admitted to "some unpleasant feelings", but he insisted that the Soviet authorities had nothing to apologise for. "I will always be sure that the order was given correctly," he told NTV's *Hero of the Day* programme. "I am absolutely certain now that this action was planned and with quite definite goals."

Mystery still surrounds why KAL Flight 007 strayed for five hours and 350 miles into Soviet airspace on September 1, during a flight from New York to Seoul.

That Moscow's tough attitude on intrusions persists was confirmed this week after two British pilots, whose aircraft strayed into Russian airspace in the Baltic region, were intercepted and forced to land by a Russian fighter.

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THE TIMES TOKEN 6

CHANGING TIMES

Afrikaner 'tiger' is stirring, says Botha

FROM SAM KILEY IN GEORGE

THE former South African President, P.W. Botha, yesterday resurfaced in South African politics after nearly a decade to declare that President Mandela's Government had awakened the "tiger" of Afrikaner nationalism and risked plunging the country into chaos.

Speaking after his trial for contempt of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission had been postponed for a month, Mr Botha took over a small courtroom in George, east of Cape Town, to deliver a speech which he could have made 15 years ago.

His only concession to the democratic reality in South Africa was to drop the adjective "black" in his warnings that the country faced a "communist onslaught".

Amid scenes that resembled a flashback to the mid-1980s, when Mr Botha, now 82, presided over the police-run apartheid state, the court was surrounded with double layers of razor wire and grim-faced policemen armed with shotguns. Beyond the wire, Mr Botha's supporters, mostly middle-aged men, held high the old South African flag while African National Congress supporters danced and sang insults at them.

An ANC demonstrator outside the court

Mr Botha has been charged with contempt after refusing to appear before the commission to answer questions about his years as Defence Minister, Prime Minister and President during the 1970s and 1980s, when he was a leading exponent of apartheid and the destabilisation of South Africa's neighbours. Yesterday he told the press conference that "apartheid", an Afrikaans word, "can be replaced [or translated] with a more positive term — good neighbourliness". Incredulous witnesses laughed.

He accused the truth commission and its chairman, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, of trying to "humiliate me and the whole Afrikaner nation", and insisted that the commission was trying to extract an apology from him for his actions while head of state. "I am not prepared to apologise for the actions which I took to remove racial discrimination in this country," he said.

At one point Mr Botha, who was sidelined and replaced by F. W. de Klerk after a stroke in 1989, admitted that he was enjoying the attention of television cameras and scores of reporters after being out of the political spotlight for years.

"I am worried we are heading for disaster. Effective government administration is grinding to a halt ... our farmers are being murdered on a daily basis. Civilised people of all groupings are becoming the victims of violent hijacks, rapes and robberies," he said. "What I prophesied is coming true. South Africa is in a precarious position."

Mr Botha said he had given a warning to President Mandela that the "forces he created will destroy him if he does not leave the scene" and that the ANC was bent on wiping out the Afrikaner nation. "Don't awaken the tiger in the Afrikaner," he declared. "Every nation has a tiger. The moment you attack its pride, its cultural values, its self-respect, you awaken the tiger in him.

"We are busy organising and telling people to stand together. If other people do not respect the Afrikaner, we will not stand having our language trampled on, we will not allow our cultural values to be trampled on," he snarled to cries support from Generals Constand Viljoen, Jannie Geldenhuys and Magnus Malan, who served under the former President. General Viljoen, an MP and leader of the Afrikaner nationalist Freedom Front, said that the truth commission was, unfortunately, alienating Afrikaners.

As the former President was swept away with his fiancee, Reinette Te Water Naude, 46, in a convoy of cars, Phillip Baxter, an ANC MP, expressed his anger at Mr Botha's attack. "This is an unrepentant dinosaur. What he's doing is awakening all these disgusting forces in our society," he said.

ADIL BRADLOW / AP

P. W. Botha, the former President, arrives at court in George yesterday with fiancée Reinette Te Water Naude

Injured Prince to go on Himalayan treks

BY EMMA WILKINS

THE Prince of Wales is pressing ahead with a foreign tour which will include trekking in the Himalayas despite fracturing a rib in a hunting accident.

The Prince fell from his horse and is likely to be in pain when he goes trekking during the official visit next month. St James's Palace said he was determined not to cancel plans to tour the foothills on his ten-day tour of Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka.

The Prince was injured on a steep bank while riding with the Wynnstay Hunt at Malpas, North Wales, on Tuesday last week. He was helped to a friend's house, where he was treated by a doctor.

"He is feeling very bruised and a bit sore," a palace spokesman said. "A cracked rib is obviously uncomfortable, but it hasn't prevented him from carrying out his engagements — and it won't prevent him carrying on as usual." The tour starts on February 2. The Prince plans a five-hour walk in the Himalayan foothills of Nepal, visiting forestry and water project sites on February 7. Four days later, in the remote Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan, he plans a high-altitude trek lasting five or six hours to visit a monastery.

Medical experts say he will be in pain for another six weeks. Charles Court-Brown, an orthopaedic surgeon at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, said: "Rib fractures normally heal very well and there is rarely a problem. However, the patient will feel pain for several weeks as you can't rest the area because you have to breathe and the ribs are always moving."

The patient will be in more pain the deeper he breathes, and at high altitudes, everyone breathes much more deeply than normal. The accident is the latest in a string of riding injuries suffered by the Prince. He broke his arm in 1990 playing polo, and four years later gave up league polo, partly because of an old back injury. He has faced calls to give up hunting, but has made it clear it is a pursuit he and Camilla Parker Bowles enjoy.

On Friday of last week, he was walking around the Duchy of Cornwall village of Newton St Lowe, near Bath, meeting tenants. On Wednesday this week he toured a cancer care unit he was opening at Hinchingbrooke Hospital in Huntingdon.

He also walked around St Edmundsbury Cathedral at Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. Later he flew by helicopter to Birkhall, the Queen Mother's home on the Balmoral estate in Scotland, where he is resting for a few days.

Many do not notice fracture

MEDICAL BRIEFING

A FRACTURED rib, such as that sustained by the Prince of Wales, is a more common injury than supposed. Many who sustain them are not X-rayed, and the fractures are only noted years later after a routine chest X-ray.

In children, fractured ribs are a frequent sign of abuse, whereas in adults they give rise to suspicion of alcoholism. A drunk may fall and damage ribs but, anaesthetised by alcohol, be indifferent to the pain until waking the next day, bruised and sore.

Traditionally, fractured ribs were treated by being strapped in adhesive plaster for a week. But this is now considered bad medicine, as it restricts deep breathing and thereby lung expansion necessary to prevent chest infections. Today's treatment seems to be hard-hearted: the doctor gives the patient pain-killing drugs, tells him to go away and to breathe as deeply as possible, despite the pain.

Fractured ribs are efficiently held together by the chest muscles and displacement of the broken ends of the bone is unusual. But occasionally a piece of broken rib may penetrate the lung. If there is bleeding into the lung, or if air gains access to the space between the lung and its lining and accumulates there, lung function may be progressively diminished and intervention could be needed.

If there are no complications, the Prince should be riding without discomfort and able to laugh heartily again within a couple of weeks.

DR THOMAS STUTTAFORD

IMF tells Mugabe to pay for whites' land

FROM JAN RAATH IN HARARE

THE International Monetary Fund has demanded that the Zimbabwe Government issue an unequivocal undertaking to compensate white farmers fully and fairly for land acquired compulsorily.

A team of IMF negotiators led by Michael Nowak, head of the Africa division, flew back to Washington on Thursday without issuing a statement. Zimbabwe has asked for $147 million (£90 million), but there are no indications of how much the IMF has offered.

Senior sources said the payment of the first tranche of the loan is conditional on either President Mugabe or Kumbirai Kangai, the Agriculture Minister, stating publicly that the Government will carry out land reform in a transparent way, and that it will pay for the land as well as improvements made by white farmers.

The IMF ultimatum is seen as the final blow to Mr Mugabe's intended confiscation of 1,480 farms, most of them owned by whites. He had agreed to pay for improvements and infrastructure but not for land, saying it had been "stolen" by whites after the arrival of the first European settlers here more than a century ago. He has also sworn to block any appeal to the courts.

Mr Mugabe's standing is at its lowest ebb. The country is just recovering from unprecedented riots and looting last week caused by economic mismanagement for which he is held personally responsible, and his credibility is in tatters. There is open talk in senior government circles that he has stayed in office too long.

Mr Mugabe has been one of the IMF's most outspoken critics, calling them "blind dictators" in late 1996. Now the IMF and the World Bank are his only recourse to restoring economic stability.

On Thursday, Mr Mugabe addressed government officials and business leaders in a manner which indicated a distinct softening of his usually bitter anti-white rhetoric over the land issue.

Mugabe: credibility is in tatters after riots

Fashion 'victims' cleared in Italy

FROM REUTERS IN MILAN

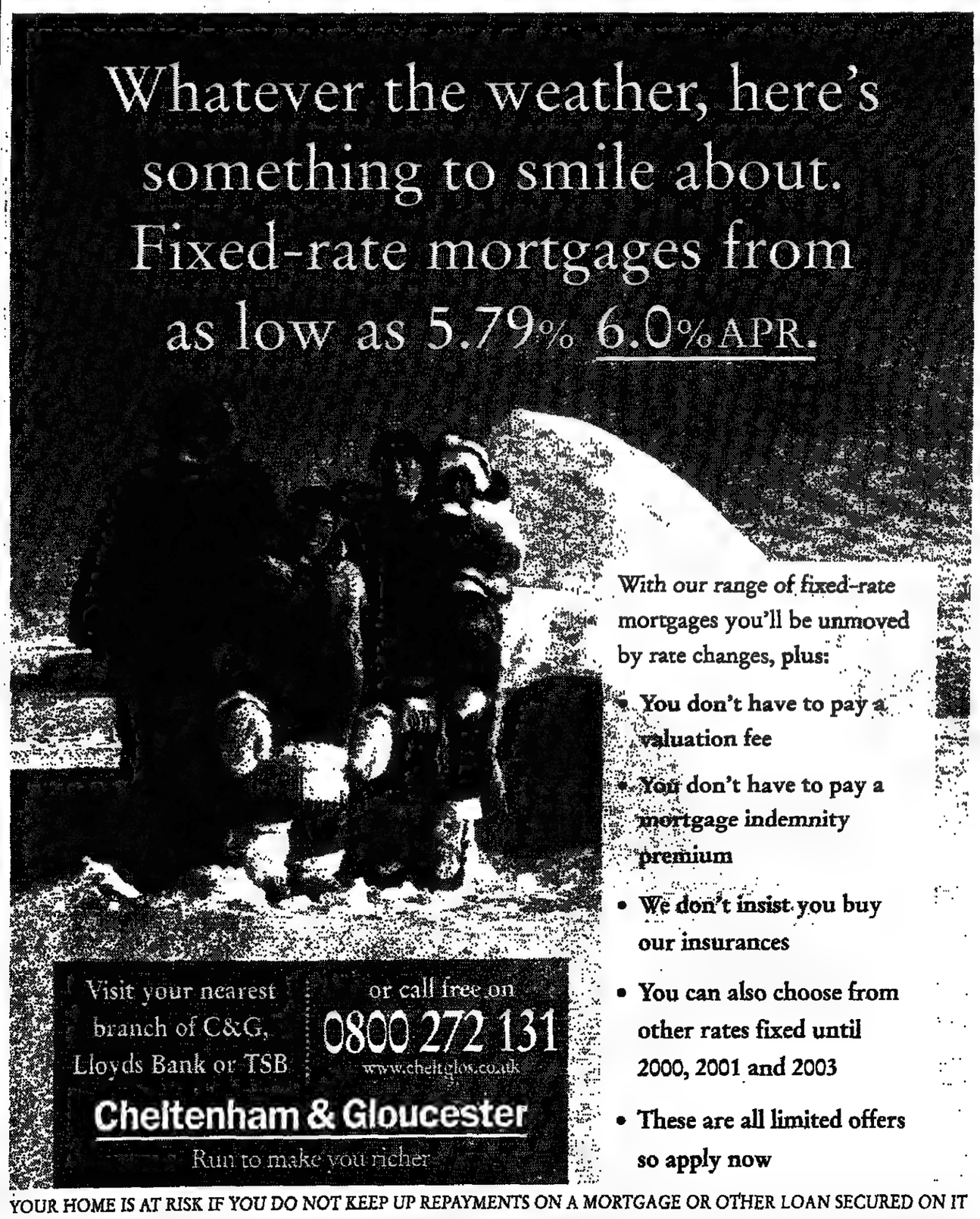
A MILAN appeals court yesterday cleared top fashion designers Gianfranco Ferre, Krizia and Gianni Versace's brother, Santo, of corruption for paying bribes to tax police, overturning convictions handed down last year.

The court said there was no case to answer because the defendants had been victims of extortion. It annulled the suspended sentences of a year and two months handed down last May.

Krizia's lawyer said after the trial: "Krizia has never corrupted anyone. She was the victim of officials who extorted money, threatening damage to her company."

Santo Versace, through his lawyers, had condemned the original verdict as "unjust" and vowed not to let the matter rest there.

The presiding judge upheld the fashion designers' defence that they had been the victims of greedy tax officials and had been forced to hand over illegal payments in return for easy audits in 1990.



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Primaries go cap-in-hand for success

By David Charter, Education Correspondent, and Nicholas Wood

PRIMARY schools are smartening up to attract pupils and revive images dented by publication of test results. Uniform manufacturers are reporting a growing demand as parents become aware of performances in examinations for 11-year-olds.

There are also signs that the test results in English, mathematics and science — printed annually for the second time next week — will lead to primaries following the same path as secondary schools in adopting glossy publicity material.

Graham Firth, school sales manager at the uniform supplier Trutex, of Clitheroe, Lancashire, said: "Competition has got very intense. Mostly they go for badged sweatshirts, but we have had schools which have gone into blazers, shirts and ties to try to get the edge on schools with sweatshirts. There are certainly more and more who have some sort of uniform."

Adopting a uniform has played a major role in the revival of fortunes at Teyfant primary in Bristol, which was second from bottom in England last year. Parents demanded a uniform in meetings with Gus Grimshaw, the head teacher, after the pupils averaged 19 out of 300 in tests. The average score in Bristol was 141. Mr Grimshaw said the effect of the new royal blue sweatshirts and polo shirts has surprised him: "I have always disliked school uniforms but the effect was amazing. On the first day of term we had parents in tears as the children came down the path. You could see the children and the parents were really proud.

"We also found children were not late any more because there was no fuss at home in the morning over what they were going to wear." The primary tables, to be published on Tuesday in *The Times*, will show Teyfant among the most improved, with an score of 84.

Tradition has long reigned at Our Lady of Victories Roman Catholic primary in South Kensington, which secured full marks in this year's tests. The boys wear caps and the girls berets in winter and boaters in summer. Pupils are taught French from the age of 5 and Latin from 7. Its intake is far from privileged; for nearly half the 230 pupils, English is not the first language at home. Goans, Italians, Spaniards, Portuguese and Latin Americans are all represented.

Mrs Brading attributes the school's success to the quality of her staff. Reading is taught as early as possible, and every class does maths every day: "We do tables. I cannot imagine any school that does not."

Discipline is strict, although Mrs Brading has not suspended a child in her three years there: "It's caps for boys to and from school. If I am at the bottom of the stairs and I tell you to put your cap on, you put it on."

GILL ALLEN

Uniformly good: pupils at Our Lady of Victories school in Kensington scored full marks in the tests

Rural church schools score the top marks

By Our Education Correspondent

RURAL Church of England schools dominate the roll-call of England's top primary schools. The national tables will show that only five of England's 15,000 primary schools have recorded perfect scores in tests for 11-year-olds two years running.

Four of these are Church of England schools, where governors are mainly parish representatives and where the Christian ethos is particularly strong. Richard Tuckwell, head teacher of Duddon St Peter's in Cheshire, said this was a crucial factor in the school's success in ensuring every child reached the level expected for their age in English, mathematics and science.

Mr Tuckwell said the strong parish links meant the whole community took an interest in children's progress. "We have a Church of England tradition and that makes us very much part of the community, and strengthens parental links with the school. It is quite an asset."

Sandra Nicholson, head of the 149-pupil Culworth Primary School near Banbury, in Northamptonshire, said its church status pulled the widespread rural community together. The local vicar and his wife pop in every fortnight to take an assembly.

"Belonging to the church family makes a difference to us because moral and social education matters a great deal to the team atmosphere here," Mrs Nicholson said.

"Most of the children are Christian, but they also know the importance of respect for other religious views."

All the top five schools serve rural areas and classes are often much smaller than in urban and city schools. St Michael's Bamford Primary School in Heywood, near Rochdale, has only seven full-time teachers, and is so isolated that very few of the children live within walking distance of the school.

Shenington Primary School, on Oxfordshire's border with Warwickshire, also has supportive parents and parish volunteers. The vice-chairman of governors teaches science and the governors' treasurer takes the children for computer lessons.

THE TOP FIVE

- Culworth End CE, Northamptonshire
- Dishforth Airfield School, Thirsk, North Yorkshire
- St Michael's Bamford CE, Heywood, Rochdale
- Duddon St Peter's CE, Tarporley, Cheshire
- Shenington CE, Banbury, Oxfordshire

The fifth school repeating its 100 per cent success rate was Dishforth Airfield primary, which serves the Army Air Corps, 9th Regiment, and children from the local village of Norton-le-Clay, six miles from Ripon in North Yorkshire.

Mark Edwards, the head teacher, who joined the school in September, said: "The main thing is low class sizes, which never exceeded 20. The school and the governors prioritised this."

Queen is blamed for poor results

By John O'Leary, Education Editor

A PRIMARY school with disappointing test results has blamed a visit by the Queen for distracting teachers and pupils from their work.

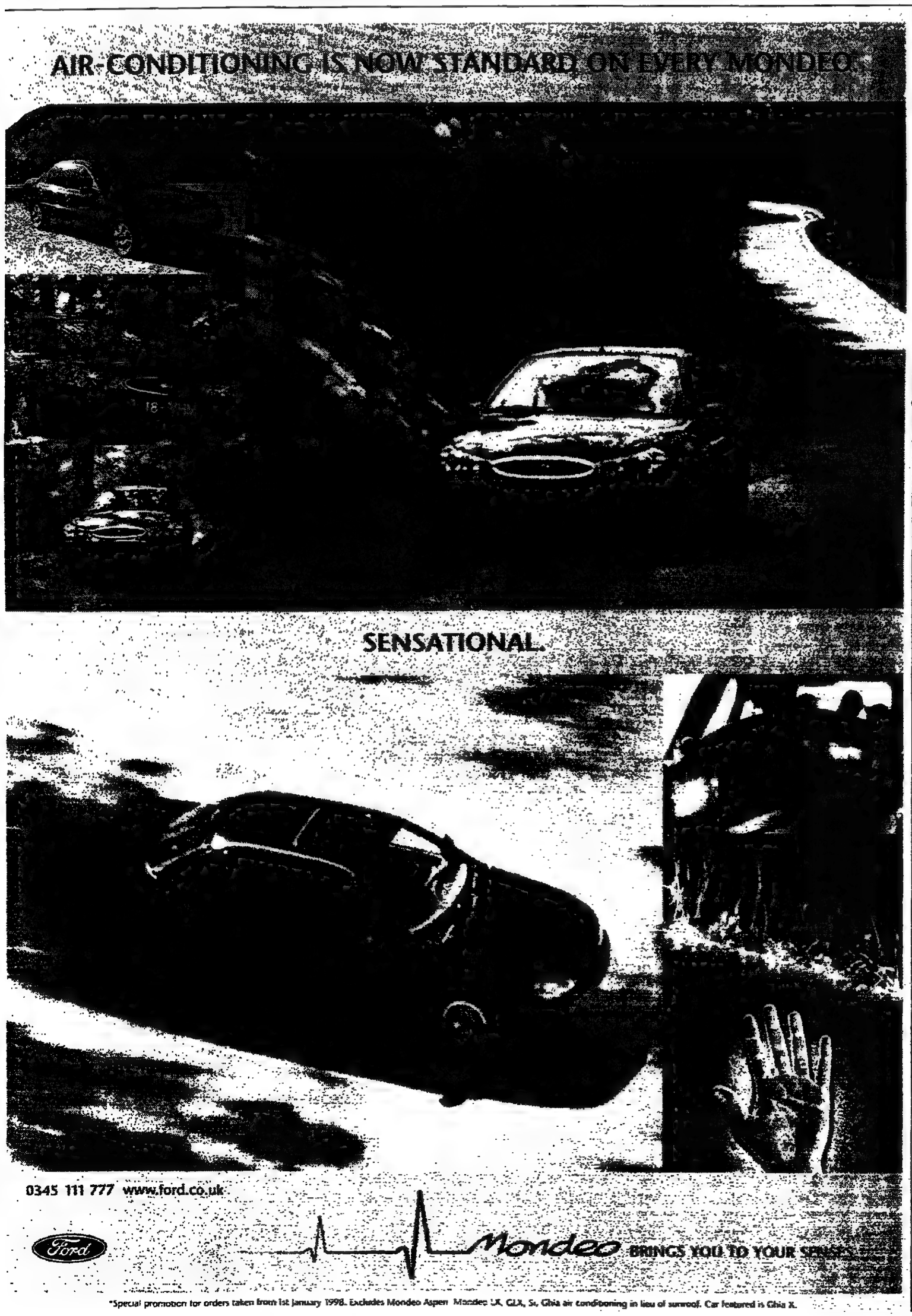
Harrowden Middle School, in Bedford, came near the bottom of the county league table of 11-year-olds' test results. Slightly more than a third of the 75 pupils reached the expected standard in English, mathematics and science, compared with the Bedfordshire average of almost two thirds.

Cheryl Birkbeck, the head teacher, said that the Queen's visit more than five months before the tests was one reason for the poor scores. Another was that the school's catchment area had an unsettled population.

"I don't like to make excuses, but the Queen's visit took our minds off learning," Mrs Birkbeck said. "The visit was a positive thing, but a large chunk of the year was taken up preparing for the big day and we would have focused a bit harder on learning if this hadn't happened."

The school was already implementing measures to raise achievement. "The Government has announced that all schools must have a literacy hour each day, and we have been having these since Christmas. Already results are improving."

A spokesman for Bedfordshire County Council said that Mrs Birkbeck had given her personal view. "The council does not believe it is the case that the visit affected the results."



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Fraud? We're too dull for that

Jersey voices polite indignation at the Government's inquiry into its tax laws, writes **Daniel McGrory**

PETER NICHOLLS

Members of the La Moye golf club are furious at Mr Straw. One, Ronald Wilson, 78, said: "Why should we be pilloried because a Labour minister has money troubles?"

Adolf Hitler troubled them in 1940. Ted Heath ruffled them for a while in 1969 when he wanted to join the EEC and they didn't, and now Jack Straw is bothering the islanders of Jersey with his suspicions that they are all on the fiddle.

The seriously rich occupants of Jersey wish the Home Secretary to know that they picked this place as much for the quiet life as the 20 per cent income tax rate and do not take kindly to outside interference. Nor do they appreciate the implication that they are sharing some louche offshore

tax haven with drug barons and shady businessmen.

The island's most celebrated tax exile, Harry Patterson — the author Jack Higgins — said: "We're too boring to do anything as exotic as launder money, as Mr Straw is implying with his heavy-handed investigation into our financial set-up. It's a slur on my character and that of my neighbours and, if he has the bottle, Mr Straw can come and delve into my bank accounts and search my drawers for dirty money. We're too dull for anything like that."

Ever since Mr Straw's announcement earlier this week of an inquiry into the financial laws and regulations in the Channel Islands and Isle of Man, righteous indignation has gripped The Beans, as Jersey's residents are known. The locals are restless and want revenge, but admit they are too placid to know how to do it. The most Mr Straw is likely to face is a delegation of worthies to his office politely registering a protest. Even so, Sir Peter Crill, the island's senior judge and former Bailiff, argues that Westminster has no business meddling in Jersey's independence as a Crown dependency: "The suggestion is the behaviour of our finance industry is affecting the character of our social lives, but surely that is a matter for us to debate?"

Financiers who provide over £700 million profit a year — two thirds of the island's income — argue that the Government's investigation could discourage investors and mar the island's reputation. John Davey, a director of Collins Stewart stockbrokers in St Helier, says: "I have worked in Mauritius, the Caribbean, Luxembourg and any number of offshire tax havens and Jersey is by far the tightest-regulated."

Members of the island's financial services industry point out they have never had a bank go bust on them. Jersey refused the Bank of Commerce and Credit International a licence (Britain and America did not, with disastrous consequences) and the island's authorities have regularly informed police in the US and in Europe when drug money has tried to wash up. Jersey police boast that they were given a $1 million reward just over a year ago by US Customs for uncovering the money-laundering activities of a Texan drug smuggler. More than 10,000 people work in Jersey's finance industry.

The issue is the only topic of conversation in the clubhouse of the La Moye golf club, where members simmer with discontent. Pulling his clubs from the boot of his brand new silver-grey Mercedes 500SL, Ronald Wilson, 78, said: "We are not crooks. I came here 30 years ago to avoid Harold Wilson's taxes when I sold my property businesses and wanted my sons to have my money, not let the Inland Revenue waste it on layabouts and spongers.

"We stay here because there is no crime, drink is duty-free — though food and clothes are expensive — and it's the perfect climate for poor old retired men to hack around with their golf clubs. If I had to pay UK taxes I would stay here, even though the speed limit is only 40mph. But why should I be pilloried now because a Labour minister has money troubles?"

Only a handful of new residents are allowed into Jersey each year after a series of interviews in which they not only have to prove that they are rich enough but that they are of "the right stuff". These newcomers get to buy properties the other 85,000 islanders cannot afford. The Blackburn football club chairman, Jack Walker, is reckoned to be the richest, with £500 million; Trevor Hemmings, who made his money in leisure and property, is next with £300 million and the golfer Ian Woosnam and racing driver Nigel Mansell have just been admitted.

Shading himself from the winter sunshine that fills his conservatory high above St Aubin's Bay, Jack Higgins says: "After 21 years as a resident, the only way to stay sane is to regularly escape the island. It's so claustrophobic. We can spend 90 nights in Britain but any number elsewhere in the world without losing our status. In January most of the island goes to Jamaica."

Jack Higgins: accused minister of being heavy-handed

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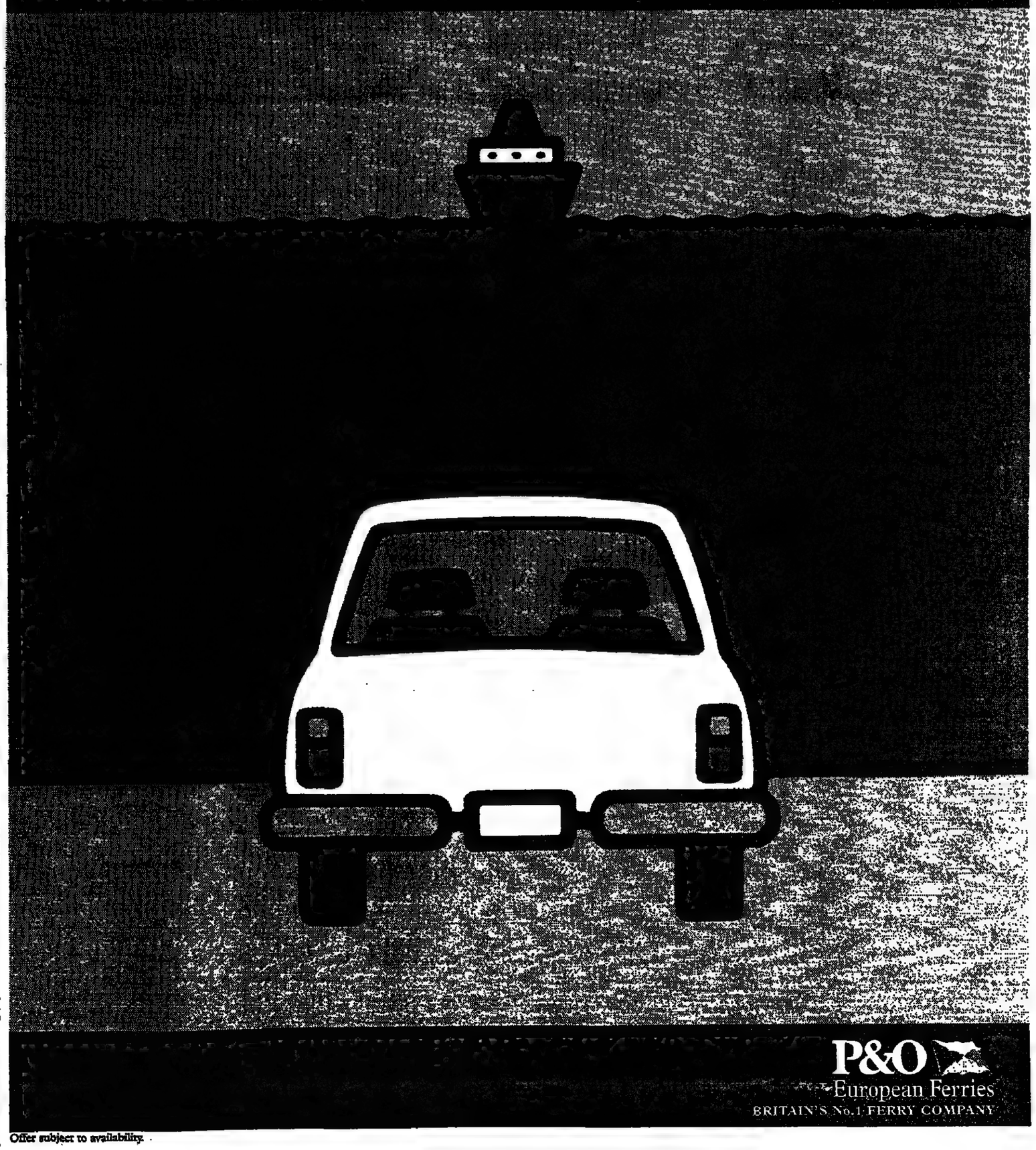

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Scotland calls time on youth crime

Three months ago, a curfew was imposed on under-16s in Hamilton to make the streets safer. Has it worked? Magnus Linklater reports

It is early evening, dark and cold on the Fairhill estate. There's an hour to go before the 8pm curfew, and there are still a few children trailing down the wet pavements. One of them drops a plastic burger carton. Joe Lowe, the local councillor, sees it and winds down the window of his car. "Hey, sonny, lift that up and put it in the bin, there," he says. The boy hesitates, then obeys. "Thanks, pal," Joe says. "See?" he grins. "They're learning."

Things are certainly changing in Hamilton, near Glasgow. Three months after a curfew was imposed on all children under 16, there is a growing sense that this is one social experiment that is working. Police report that vandalism and petty crime are down; complaints about noise and drinking on the streets have been reduced; parents say the streets feel safer.

The only dissenters seem to be the children. "What right have they to interfere with our freedom?" one 15-year-old demanded. Another said he was simply ignoring the ban.

Chief Superintendent Jim Ellion, one of the main instigators of the experiment — known officially as the child safety initative — takes a relaxed view. "We don't tend to use the word 'curfew' because we want to convince them it's for their safety rather than to restrict their freedom. If it's a warm spring evening and there's still daylight, I doubt if we'll be hauling them off the street."

Drugs, under-age drinking, vandalism, crime, above all the nightly mayhem of noisy children out of control had made life on the three estates of Fairhill, Whitehill and Hillhouse a misery. There had been several murders and a pub and a house have been destroyed by fire. Boarded-up houses, broken windows and graffiti-scarred walls make one end of Fairhill look more like the Falls Road. Most of it is now empty, marked for redevelopment.

Police, increasingly concerned about the safety of young children and unable to persuade families to keep them in after dark, proposed a joint initiative with the Scottish Office. Children breaking the curfew would be taken back home. If there was no one at home, they would be kept at the police station until their parents returned.

The scheme, introduced last October, met with worldwide interest as the first of its kind in Britain. The children, inevitably, played up to the media, shouting their defiance at police and making a show of ignoring the curfew. Within the first weekend, more than 30 — one as young as four — had been rounded up. Within a week that had risen to 52.

But then the numbers started tailing off. Parents and councillors, who welcomed the scheme, seemed determined to make it work. John and Margaret McCormick, who have three children, were moved from the worst end of Fairhill, where they had been terrorised. "It wasn't safe for our wee boy to go out at all," Mr McCormick said. "He never saw the light of day. It was terrifying." His wife shuddered as she remembered thugs as young as 14, "a bottle in one hand and a fag in the other," looking for trouble.

Now they feel secure. Their house looks out on to a quiet street. Their youngest child, Malcolm, plays on a rug in front of the fire. "We feel so much safer. Where we were before, we kept the children in anyway, but that was simply fear. Now it's for their own good," Mrs McCormick said.

But their son Thomas, 13, objected. "I don't feel any safer," he said. "I want to be able to go out on a Saturday and meet my friends."

Down at the civic centre, where line-dancing, aerobics, and a weekly credit union meeting were taking place, there was near-universal approval. "It definitely needed doing," John Queen, the supervisor, said. "The whole atmosphere has changed."

Mr Lowe said that one by-product had been a new relationship between the community and the police. "People have seen that action has been taken, with the council and the police working together. It has improved self-respect. I believe it's a stepping-stone to greater things."

Mr Elliott said that, halfway through the six-month scheme, it had exceeded expectations. "There have been no complaints, no displacement of disorder to other areas. We've achieved a high degree of support from residents, and very few repeat offences from children we've picked up."

He has been inundated with requests for information about the scheme, not just from within Britain, but from France, Germany and Brazil.

Back at the community centre, there was rather less enthusiasm round the pool table. Joe, Shug, Peter, Liam, Samantha, Paddy and "Kevin Semtex", whose ages ranged from 13 to 16, talked about how they were going to evade the police come the summer. "Freedom!" they chorused, in mock defiance.

But even among the rebels there was a sense that the restrictions were there to stay. "Maybe, if it was 9 o'clock . . ." Liam said. "That wouldnae be so bad."

MIKE WILKINSON

Time out: 15-year-old boys on the Fairhill estate in Hamilton, near Glasgow, where an experimental 8pm curfew has cut teenage crime

SCOTS LAW

■ In Scotland, a person must be brought to trial within 110 days of being charged. The Home Office is looking at the feasibility of a much tighter timescale in England and Wales.

■ Plans for an order to bar convicted paedophiles from going near parks or other areas where children are at risk were announced in Scotland in the autumn and appeared in the Government's Crime and Disorder Bill in December.

■ Children's panels in Scotland deal with young offenders or children at risk of getting into trouble. The Home Office is to create youth panels, similar to children's panels, who will deal with offenders making their first appearances in court in England and Wales.

■ In Scotland, the age of criminal responsibility is eight. The Government has moved towards this age by proposing to abolish the ancient law which said that a child aged ten or under was incapable of committing a criminal offence.

Table talk serves children well

By Richard Ford
Home Correspondent

SCOTLAND'S system for dealing with young people in trouble has emerged in Jack Straw's proposals to curb youth crime. The Home Secretary has tailored part of his overhaul of youth justice in England and Wales by borrowing elements from the Scottish Children's Panel System.

Introduced 27 years ago, it is a more informal inquisitorial system than that operating in England and Wales, and seeks to involve everyone in a case — from parents to police — to ensure they focus on the child's needs. A recently retired member of a panel, who also served as magistrate in England, said yesterday: "It knocks spots off the English system. I do not know why the English don't just copy it."

The panel comprises three lay volunteers under the guidance of a "reporter", similar to the clerk in an English youth court. They hear cases involving children who have committed offences or who are in danger of drifting into crime. A case may be referred by the police, social workers or school as a result of truancy, petty crime, child sexual abuse or any other matter that appears likely to put the youngster at risk. An offender under 16 is always referred initially to the panel.

Panel participants sit at one table

If a youngster denies an offence, the sheriff decides on guilt, but the panel decides what should be done. Mr Straw has suggested that, in England and Wales, stipendiary magistrates would decide on guilt, leaving the sentencing to lay magistrates.

In the panel's proceedings, parents, social worker, police, teacher and the panel sit around a table to reach decisions addressing the causes of difficulty, rather than assigning blame. Mr Straw has suggested that all participants in English youth courts would sit around a single table, and that first offenders who plead guilty would be referred to a youth panel.

In Scotland, the panel's discussions are frank, the parents are expected to contribute, and the reasoning in reaching a decision takes place at the table rather than in a separate room. If rows develop, it is usually between parents. On one occasion a woman picked up a chair to try to attack her partner.

The former panel member said: "The child is encouraged to say what he or she thinks, and the parents can put their point of view and disagree what others have said.

"If the fact that the parents could not get up in the morning, or had a serious drink problem, was having an adverse effect on the child, then we would say so."

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A good joke's worth sharing

Libel cases may seem costly charades, but we all enjoy it when public figures take offence, writes Valerie Grove

It is a truism that a courtroom is like a theatre, and this week's Royal Courts of Justice productions easily matched the Royal Shakespeare Company's. "House full" notices were up every day outside Court 13, where the Richard Branson show, starring George Carman, QC, and Richard Ferguson, QC, finished its second week: next door you could watch Rupert Allason directing himself for a limited season; and in Court 60 you could catch the last act of the farce. *Will the Real Alan Clark Please Stand Up?*

Do we trivialise the concept of justice by viewing cases as entertainment? I don't think so. There were no human tragedies here, no acts of violence: nobody had died, nobody stood under threat of a prison sentence. Some may think all three actions were self-inflicted. Vauntingly rich, successful men with bruised egos were crying collectively "Foul!". In two cases, the bone of contention was humour. The most serious question ruling the Clark and Allason verdicts was: "Can't he take a joke?" I was in court for Rupert Allason's libel action against the BBC book of *Have I Got News For You* not out of a ghoulish wish to see the former Tory MP for Torbay cut down to size, but as a potential witness for the defence. Among the evidence was an interview of mine with Allason in 1993, just after he had done his vanishing act instead of voting on Maastricht. I was not called, as it turned out — which was both a relief and a disappointment.

But I listened as my long, chatty session at Allason's home was, when transcribed from my tapes, and photocopied from my notebook, transformed in evidence into something inflammatory. I had quoted Allason as saying, in his own choice of phrase, that none of his parliamentary colleagues had called him "a ghastly little shit" (on the record, at least), thus inviting the suspicion that he had expected it.

Allason is not without a sense of humour. His appearances on *Have I Got News For You* (fee: £650) and in *Clive Anderson Talks Back*, replayed in court, showed that he could give as good as he got. When Anderson asked Allason what newspapers wrote that led him to sue them, Allason responded, "Usually the truth." This, he explained when cross-examined, had been "what is known as a joke".

Allason says litigation is his hobby. It's been a good earner for him, with 17 settlements in his favour. But this was the first time he had faced a jury. He kept throwing piggy-eyed sideways glances at the 12 poker-faced men and women. And when the jury foreman said, "We find for the defendants", a silence fell: the BBC contingent restraining their jubilation while the hubristic Allason left the court (facing a £50,000 bill) with his beautiful young girlfriend and his elegant 77-year-old mother. It had been rather touching when his mother, his only witness, took the stand (first question: "You are my mother, I believe?") to be asked by him, "Are you proud of your son?" Mrs Allason replied: "Yes, I am. I was particularly proud when he arrested some drug smugglers . . ." But she was cut short by Mr Justice Popplewell, who has the demeanour of the late John Wells got up in judicial robes.

Colin Swash, the writer-producer of *Have I Got News For You*, who had written of Allason: "Given his fondness for pursuing libel actions, there are excellent legal reasons for not calling him a conniving little shit," said in defence that it was the language of "the grown-up playground", much used in professions such as television comedy and politics, and often resorted to by Alan Clark. "While it's not a nice word, it's not an extraordinary word; it's one that politicians might use about someone they weren't pleased with."

Cross-examined, Swash instructed Allason on how a joke works. He would expect most insulted politicians to shrug and carry on. "I see politicians as having pretty broad backs and thick skins, particularly those prepared to appear in comedy shows." Allason: Would he be upset if his child was called such a word? Swash: "Well, I would not be surprised if my six-year-old son was called it in the playground." (Laughter).

In the courtroom, the atmosphere is ecclesiastically hushed, the pace deliberate, and the air weighty with respectful propriety: so the Allason and Clark cases may seem much ado about very little, an elaborate and costly charade. In the world outside, there is real human misery and wrongdoing; under these lofty stone ceilings, the bewigged ones are arguing about whether a joke is funny or not.

Charles Gray, QC, stood up for jokes at politicians' expense, a necessary safety valve in the modern world. The tradition of poking fun at politicians was a valuable one, "good for them and good for us, and should continue". John Gummer, Michael Heseltine, Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare and Alan Duncan might well be equally upset by this book, but "it's all part of the cut and thrust". Nor could the *Have I Got News For You* book be taken seriously by its readers: "It is the kind of book that might find its way into a particular room in many people's houses."

Mr Justice Popplewell's summing-up for the jury was most instructive. The last libel summing-up I heard was the late Sir Bernard Caulfield's memorable one in Jeffrey Archer's libel victory, in which the words "has she fragrance?" had us all agape. Popplewell was more balanced. There was much "You don't have to take any notice of what I say" and "It is entirely a matter for you to decide." The words, he said, were undoubtedly offensive, but "the fact that something is offensive does not make it defamatory. And the fact that someone is upset does not mean that they have been libelled. People in public life, including judges," he added, "have to endure a lot of criticism which they may think is unfair or offensive." That Allason was a litigious person who had gained reward in the past was not a matter the jury should take into account.

But if they did find that the plaintiff had been subjected to a wholly unjustifiable, vicious libel, and felt they must compensate him for the damage to his reputation, then the top whack should be about £10,000. For guidance, he told them that that was the kind of sum you might get if you lost your sense of taste, or two of your fingers. But if they thought this man was just a gold-digger, and that it was a storm in a teacup, they could award him as little as one penny.

After the judgment in the Clark case — in Clark's favour, the judge deciding that the London *Evening Standard* should pay £250,000 costs for "passing off" its spoof diary as Clark's own (to the inattentive reader) — Max Hastings, the Editor, said he was disappointed that Clark, "the great economist with the actualité", had pursued his action at all. But it was actually a victory for both sides: Mr Justice Lightman's judgment did not forbid future political parodies. And the *Standard* promptly carried on, on Thursday carrying a bumper edition of another clever parody by Peter Bradshaw of the almost unparodiable Clark. "We cherish a sneaking affection for the old brute," declared Hastings's editorial. "The only kindness we would deny him in his old age is to take him seriously."

Political badinage has not been killed off, as some hasty coverage suggested this week. On the same day, Messrs Blair and Hague showed that politicians can still take a joke when Steve Penk, the Capital Radio DJ, managed to get through to 10 Downing Street with a William Hague soundalike (Jon Culshaw, who does the voices for most of Penk's hoaxes) to offer him a Cher exercise video. Blair's quick guffaw was to his credit, as was Hague's riposte when told about it at Prime Minister's Questions. Penk, late of Piccadilly Radio, Manchester, says not every famous victim of his hoaxes takes it in good part.

There is no rehearsal for a courtroom drama, and the denouement is invariably a surprise. Those who perform well in the witness box — and strong men say how lonely and vulnerable it feels — deserve one of those supernumary theatrical awards. Will Whitehorn, Branson's head of corporate affairs, was particularly good this week, much appreciated for his John McEnroe imitation. And speaking for the audience, I say: long may public figures continue to take offence and summon their lawyers for our enjoyment. As long as they don't sue us, of course.

ADRIAN SHERRATT & ANDRE CAMARA

Glad hand: Alan Clark, who has won his case against the London *Evening Standard* for "passing off" its spoof diary as his own

Hands off: Richard Branson, still involved in a two-way libel action, and Rupert Allason, £50,000 poorer this week after losing

Where rock meets rhyme

POETRY

John Hegley
Bloomsbury Theatre

WHAT glory to live in a time when a poet can fill a two-tier auditorium — not in a country of rhyming revolutionaries but in England, of all places.

There ought to be a logical progression from pop to performed verse: after all, the deft mumblings of Jarvis Cocker have already succeeded the shout of rap. But it takes a performer as extraordinary as John Hegley to persuade audiences to make that leap across.

He is a child of the pop generation: he says of his family that "the Beatles were one of the three things we could appreciate together — the other two being sleep and oxygen". But the tricks he turns with language are peculiarly his own, and he spikily refuses to adopt any veneer of rock'n'roll cool.

If anything, his comical, dour stage persona wavers between the not-normal child and the liberal teacher he once was. While the new poets on the block are all BritArt and cocaine, Hegley sticks resolutely to material with a small-town pathos: bungalows, dogs and the Co-op.

His new show, with his even more dour musical sidekick "Nigel", comprises poetry, songs, stories, sideshows, a competition and even a spot of dancing. Slides are projected of drawings, mostly of dogs and potatoes, the highlight of which is a man in a toga flicking a V-sign — which Hegley captions as "A Roman ordering five pints of beer". He sings a lute-song to Luton, and a song about his dog biting him, which crescendos: "My dog, my dog, why hast thou mistaken me?"

It is the wry, melancholic edge to his poetry proper that keeps his fans coming back to performances even when they can recite the lines along with him. As at the Edinburgh Festival, this performance traces his life-story. But whereas in his summer shows he was still making peace with his dead father, that figure has now receded from being the embodiment of violence to being merely disapproving.

Hegley's new-found peace reflects his poetic growth.

No one else who combines exciting and comic writing with such brilliant showmanship is likely to emerge in the near future. But his growing status might encourage a new generation to try to follow in his footsteps.

HETTIE JUDAH

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It'd better be good this time Mr President

Bronwen Maddox says Clinton can't survive with weasel words

The high point of comedy in what may yet prove to be the tragedy of Bill Clinton was the sight of Yassir Arafat sidelined in a White House photo-opportunity arranged to highlight the Middle East peace talks. The Palestinian leader goggled as the most powerful man in the world was quizzed on whether he had had a sexual relationship with a 21-year-old trainee in a small room behind the Oval Office.

The rest of the world's fascination with the drama playing in Washington this week is at least partly the power of the machinery that the US Constitution brings to bear on even the suspicion of "high crimes and misdemeanours". In theory, the world could suddenly have President Al Gore thrust upon it. Overnight, he would preside over the Middle East peace process, Northern Ireland, Bosnia and other negotiations in which Mr Clinton has been so personally involved, and of which the Vice-President knows little — simply because two people have been unable to give a credible account of their relationship. Although talk of Mr Clinton's impeachment this week was inevitable, it was premature. The existence of tape-recorded conversations gives a spurious sense of solidity to a story which may forever be impossible to substantiate. Editors from *Newsweek* magazine, who have had access to 90 minutes of the 20 hours of tapes, but who held back from publishing their scoop last Saturday, say they had doubts about the credibility of Monica Lewinsky, the trainee. There is clearly a case, which the White House has begun delicately to make, that the President is highly vulnerable to becoming the subject of fantasies of "star-struck" admirers.

It is, too, an exaggeration at this stage to compare the scandal to Watergate. True, there is the question of whether Mr Clinton lied under oath, a federal crime. But the accusations do not yet compare in flavour or constitutional significance to Richard Nixon's "enemies lists" and his attempt to distort the apparatus of democratic elections. It is worth remembering that the Clinton sworn statements that are in question were made in a civil case about long past and unprovable accusations.

Yet this story has acquired power partly because the White House's formidable bureaucracy should yield hard records to verify at least some of the charges. If true, the allegations raise questions — about Mr Clinton and America — far more intriguing than Watergate. So far, Americans have dismissed Mr Clinton's reputation for womanising as irrelevant to his job, drawing a distinction between public and private behaviour in a way normally thought more European. In this, Mr Clinton has not been hurt by his firm location within the Southern Baptist tradition, which lends itself easily to a rhetoric of "I was lost, but now I'm saved".

But in a country which shows its puritanical roots as clearly as the United States, there must be a question of what would cause this tolerance to snap. Although much has been made of Ms Lewinsky's youth — she is only five years older than the President's daughter, Chelsea — that may not prove a critical factor; Mr Clinton is no Woody Allen. Ms Lewinsky was, after all, a graduate who competed for a place in the cockpit of the nation's political life, where a degree of worldiness is expected.

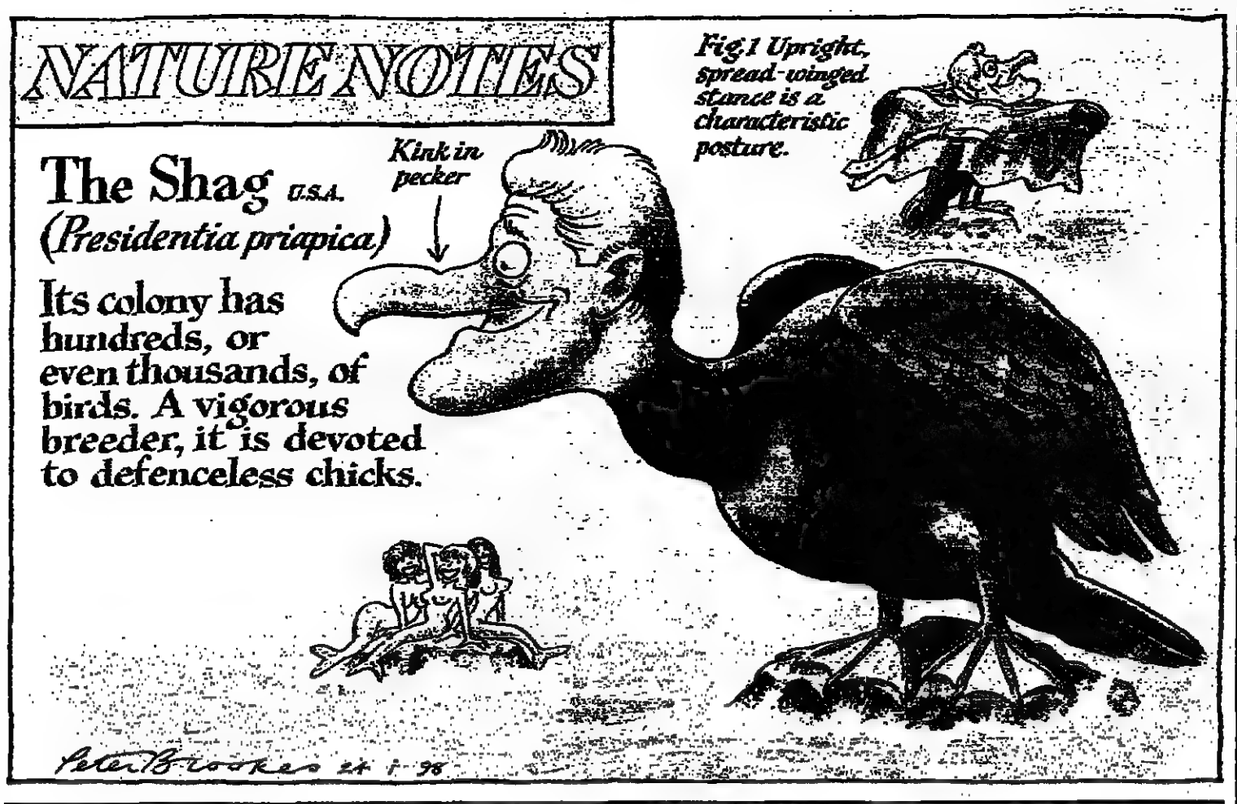
The real fascination, if the allegations are proved, will be what it shows of Mr Clinton. The tale would become a classical tragedy of a man brought down by his fatal flaw, a man so gripped by his compulsions that he risks the greatest prize on the ability of a 21-year-old to keep one of the world's juiciest secrets.

So far, there are signs that Americans care more about whether the President lied than about the truth of an affair. It is clear that the President's reputation, even his survival, will depend on how he responds to these charges. That is why it is so striking that the White House has given so muddy an explanation of the events. The President, who has said vehemently that the allegations are "false", wants to speak and give a full account as soon as his lawyers will let him, we are told. But at the end of this extraordinary week, the residing impression is of weasel words, which need parsing with ingenuity worthy of a doctorate. Of these, the most startling is the White House's carefully crafted ambiguity about whether the President had an affair with Gennifer Flowers, the Arkansas singer, a charge he denied formally but unconvincingly in his 1992 election campaign.

Americans care more about lies than about an affair

Underpinning Mr Clinton's genius as a politician has been his willingness to play with sophistries about what he promised. But the practice — more marked in the first term than the second — carries a risk of fostering disillusionment; the phenomenon of falling out of love with Mr Clinton was dramatised by Joe Klein in *Primary Colours*. Ms Lewinsky seems to be one more acolyte turned sour.

As a matter of course, Americans do not like their presidents to lie. Confessing to an affair would certainly test the American capacity for tolerance. But it is clear that the President will be severely damaged, possibly beyond recovery, if he does not produce an unambiguous, credible account of his relations with Monica Lewinsky.



A Luddite's lament

The computer's flying pigs have already seen off handwriting and the typewriter — but is it progress?

Simon Jenkins

Petrarch had his quills. Trollope had his nibs. Journalists of old had their Remingtons, clogged with ash and stained with coffee. Now we have computers. Mine is ten years old and must be replaced. As it creaks its last, it has been declared obsolete, as has its language. This is the final article I shall inscribe in the computing version of Old High Gothic, an archaic tongue known as MS-Dos. I have arrived at the gates of the great god windows and must learn its tricks. At the risk of being a Luddite, I must admit to hating it. I am not at the gates of windows, merely at the Windows of Gates. It is scarcely believable that ten years of software development has produced a system that is incomparably worse than its predecessor, a fact that even its salesman blithely admit. Oh, said mine, technology does not always advance.

The impact of the word-processor on modern writing is a favourite topic among practitioners. Writers can now pour out words at a tremendous speed. We can correct, check and transmit them direct into newspapers. We can type as fast as we can think, and print even faster. We are the cheetahs of the written word. No wonder modern novels are gigantic affairs. As Truman Capote said of the verbose James Michener: "That's not writing, it's typing". Modern newspapers are equally gargantuan, in part because computer-printing has sent costs plummeting. Words come cheap when they have Intel inside.

I began on typewriters. They were imperfect inventions. They replaced blistered fingers with aching joints. Nietzsche loved them because his eyesight was failing and they let him see the print. Sherlock Holmes deplored them since they told him nothing of a writer's personality. They made a ferocious clatter and the earliest were not surprisingly made by Remingtons, the gunsmiths. The keyboard was configured to a senseless layout of letters that has baffled historians ever since. The "qwerty" sequence placed most-used letters next to each other, increasing the likelihood of the bars jamming: E next to R, I next to O and G next to H. Some say this was deliberate, so the typists had to go slow to give the carriage time to move; others that it was a restrictive practice to prevent typists putting clerks out of business; others that it was so dumb salesmen could type "typewriter" quickly with two fingers along the top row. I prefer the last explanation. Yet "qwerty" has carried its endearing idiocy into the computer age, where it can join Windows 95 among the bum steers of technology.

The word-processor changed everything. Like the mobile phone it was a true revolution. For the past decade I have used MS-Dos in a Toshiba laptop. I could open it up, type in a single command (where Windows takes five) and have before me a clean page in seconds. Commands were simple and writer-friendly. What had once taken sheafs of paper, a sub-editing desk, a library of cuttings and a hot-metal typesetting machine, was now in my lap. I could press a modem button and the work was sent to press. It was as near a perfect writing machine as technology could produce. Yet it is now obsolete and out of production.

The contrast with Windows 95 is total, proof positive that scientific advance is sometimes a retard. The Windows system may suit business analysts and fashion designers. But for those who seek simple efficiency in their daily tools, it is to be avoided. My new machine takes longer to load, uses more power, has a shorter battery life and is heavier to carry. Using it is like wandering in a maze of maddening and useless alleys. The screen is cluttered with promotional logos for Microsoft and cascades of Disneyesque icons. I left the machine on for five minutes and mad pigs started flying across the screen. For the stately cursor of MS-Dos, Windows 95 substitutes a nightmare mouse that scuttles at random over the screen at the lightest touch on a rubber joystick. Computer design has dumbed down with a vengeance. After days practising on the new equipment, I fell limp on my old machine and felt like hugging it.

Dr Johnson maintained that "what is written without effort is in general read without pleasure". The converse is that good writing comes hard. Looking back through my handwritten school essays I was surprised at how few crossings-out they contained. Today I would have rewritten them five times over. I am sure the reason was that they were physically hard to write. The slowness of the hand disciplined the brain. What would be difficult to alter or erase was written with care. The casual facility of the computer leads to sloppiness. Most writers using word-processors find the time spent correcting early drafts more or less equates with the time originally spent on handwritten text.

Equally the e-mail, unlike the handwritten letter, is emotionally ponderous. This electronic Eros is said to have revived the art of the love letter. Millions of these missives now flow down the lines, where previously was only idle chatter. Hurrah for that. At least e-mails are written, in a sort of English and a sort of grammar. But words printed on a screen pack a monotonous punch. Their writers are often unaccustomed to the power of the printed word and tend, in computer jargon, to "flare". Their meaning becomes exaggerated and distorted in transmission. Printed words written in haste lack the care and character of handwriting.

Yet this surely is a hopeless cause. Handwriting is becoming a defunct skill. It is the Cinderella "R". Barely a month passes without a politician deploring the state of the "three Rs". Yet only two are ever cited, reading and arithmetic. These are duly subjected to the full rigour of educational retrenchment. Bring back phonetic reading, goes the order from Downing Street. Rise each morning at the muezzin's call and recite the seven times table. A curse was last week laid even on the pocket calculator. But amid all this back to basics, there was no mention of writing. There was no curse on word-processors, no demand for a revival of glorious copperplate or slender italic.

In an artless age, handwriting was the nearest many children came to appreciating the beauty of shape, the flow of line and the pleasure of neatness. The fashioning of words on paper is the outward expression of an inner sense of order. Since the earliest pictograms writing has been an aesthetic exercise, as well as a means of communication. To the Chinese, calligraphy is more than a form of writing. It is an indicator of character. Not apparently in modern Britain. Here calligraphy has become little more than a branch of industrial design.

To the monarchs of the British curriculum, the culture of primary education is now fashioned of reading and maths. As far as writing is concerned, pupils are expected to mark time before ascending the electronic temple of "qwerty". Any old scrawl will do as children wait their turn at the keyboard, to go "on message" from the great browsers of Whitehall. While calculators are banned, word-processors are showered with praise. I assume the computers that are now to be installed in every classroom in the land will have their calculator function censored. Why bother to teach joined-up writing, when IBM will do the job for you? But in that case, why bother to teach maths? The only writing cramp the child of the future need suffer is backache. Its signature will be a thumbprint.

Perhaps Bill Gates has the answer to this degeneration. Windows 95 was meant to put Dr Johnson's hard slog back into writing. MS-Dos addicts have had life easy for too long. We need to write our prose while facing that challenge of an electronic Indiana Jones, wrestling with mice, dumping in bins, headbutting icons and smashing windows. We need to curse a bit. But I am sure Mr Gates has the measure of us. Watch out for Windows 2000. This will be a back-to-basics program of even more fiendish complexity. Out will go the mouse and in will come the quill. We shall have to move it by hand laboriously over the lighted surface, stopping occasionally for ink. The printer will use parchment or vellum. And when the work is done, we shall take from our sack a scrap of blotting paper, and dab our tears from the screen.

The media misses our message

Peter Mandelson says party political broadcasts are vital

Broadcasters announced their determination this week to abolish party political broadcasts, apart from at election time. Then broadcasts would be increased from one to two for local and European elections.

The ostensible case for change is that we are all subjected to so much politics and so many elections that the existing system produces a surfeit of party political broadcasts which will alienate the voters. The received wisdom is that people always turn them off or go and make a cup of tea.

In fact, every broadcast is watched by millions of viewers. If they are well-produced, they can and do capture the interest of the viewer. They provide the only opportunity for political parties to communicate with the public without editorialising by journalists. In particular, they give the Opposition and minority parties access to the airwaves. The Government can always rely on massive media coverage, but it is far more difficult for other parties. We found this during 18 years out of office and we do not intend to take advantage of our position at the Opposition's expense now.

The proposals would deny voters the chance to hear a properly articulated case by the parties about their policies. This is a diminution of democracy. For broadcasters to assert that, apart from during elections, they know best and everything can successfully be filtered through them, is something we cannot accept.

The changes would prevent any broadcasts in the second six months of the year since local elections take place in May, and European elections in June. The idea that the political year ends then and voters' interests and democratic rights are suspended is preposterous.

Every autumn party conferences take place, creating a heightened awareness of politics. Why should broadcasts be permitted during the spring elections, but denied during the autumn conferences? And what about specific occasions when a political party wishes to put over a special message to the electorate.

Just as alarming is the broadcasters' determination to abolish Budget broadcasts. Their argument is that there is so much coverage on television and radio that broadcasts are no longer necessary. But most people who cannot listen to the Budget statement live get their news from commentators, who put their own interpretation on it. And live coverage rarely gives the complete response from the opposition parties.

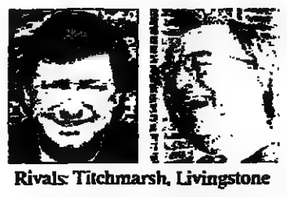
The only way this can be rectified is to let the major parties put their case without reinterpretation. At the time of the Budget there is intense public interest: ending the broadcasts would deprive the opposition parties of their only chance to explain what they would have done instead.

The strongest argument for the broadcasts is that they give all the major parties access to voters via television and radio without letting them buy time, which is what happens in America. The issue of broadcasts will be considered by the Neill Committee as it looks into party funding and we will certainly draw our concerns to its attention.

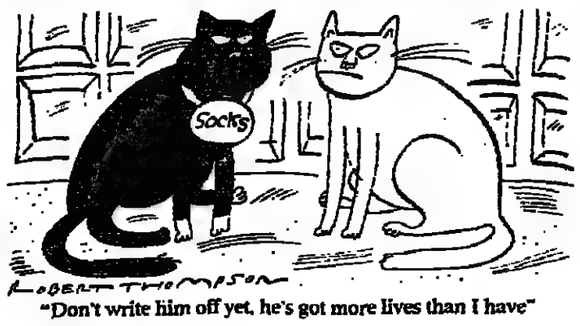
There is now a two-month consultation period, during which we will be urging the broadcasters to change their minds. I trust that, once the full implications of the proposals are understood, many other groups and individuals will do the same.

Sowing discord

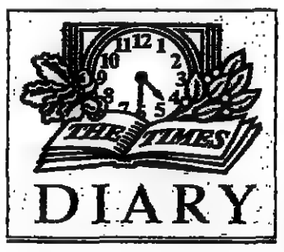
KEN LIVINGSTONE is to challenge Alan Titchmarsh for the mantle of television's top gardener. The endearing leftwinger spent Thursday morning making a pilot for a weekly half hour gardening show for the BBC. Following in the muddy footsteps of Percy Thrower and Geoff Hamilton, Mr Livingstone pottered around a proletarian plot in front of a camera talking like a knowledgeable sort about pruning and the dangers of frost. The role would require him to undergo the nearest he will ever get to an image makeover. Out will go the scruffy pair of trainers and crumpled jacket. In will come green wellington boots and a smart anorak.


Rivals: Titchmarsh, Livingstone

Mr Livingstone gained his green fingers in the back garden of his home in Cricklewood. But he does admit to one drawback. "I am amazed that anyone would want to hear my voice because it is so discordant." The programme's producers have no such qualms. "Those nasal tones are terrific. The public have ceased to see him as Red Ken and now consider him rather cuddly." Titchmarsh is relaxed about the new contender to his crown. "There is as much chance of Ken becoming the country's top gardener as me getting elected Prime Minister."



"Don't write him off yet, he's got more lives than I have"



JASPER GERARD

● *PIPEDOWN, the Campaign Against Piped Music, has gained a militant crusader in the form of the pianist, John Lill. "I was in a lift in Australia recently, and some loud rubbish was piping out of the stereos," he says. "I had a sharp instrument on me, so I just cut through the wires."*

Noises off

EMANCIPATION has done little to oil the cogs of Indian bureaucracy. To celebrate the 50th anniversary of their independence, officials in Delhi had invited Lord Menuhin to conduct the Lithuanian Symphony Orchestra in a concert in the Red Fort today.

All was set — tickets had been touted: onion bhajis baked for the interval — when the word went out that the musical lord was unwell and the concert was off. It was a poor excuse. Menuhin is in fine form and playing as heartily as ever. He and the orchestra are as baffled as each other.

● *PATERNAL consternation is unsettling the career of actress Gwyneth Paltrow, who has just finished filming a rather salacious adaptation of* Great Expectations. *The sight of young Gwyneth cavorting around the set half-naked was too much for her father, Bruce Paltrow: he boycotted Tuesday night's premiere in Los Angeles.*

Paltrow: dressing down

OLD TIMES
"THE Conservatives have diverted precious resources away from frontline services into bureaucracy, red tape and image building" — Margaret Beckett, in 1995. This week, it was disclosed that service bills on her government flat come to almost £100,000.

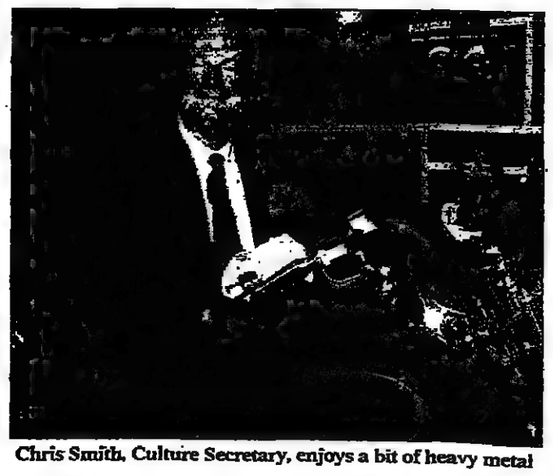
"My dad stayed at home and I bought my mother and grandmother," says Gwyneth. "I feel fine about the movie, but I better keep my father out of this."

Looks familiar

WITH immaculate timing, Howell Jones, who guided John Major through his last, sleaze-filled days, arrives in Washington today. He has been invited to the British Embassy to toast the recent marriage of Sir Christopher Meyer, Major's old press secretary, who is now our man in the fevered city. Jones, who worked as Major's damage limitation expert during the torrid days of Hamilton and Aitken, should find the Clinton-obsessed capital comfortingly familiar.

● *Poor Labour: after the fun of Gordon Brown's biography, Paul Routledge has set his sights on a new target. "I'm writing an unauthorised biography of Peter Mandelson. I hope it will be revelatory and mischievous." I look forward to reading the tome with great interest.*

NEW TIMES
DOUGLAS HURD's legacy, it seems, lives on at the Foreign Office; computer types chatting in cyberspace say that the cause of a glitch in the system was found to be umpteen works in progress by civil servants with ambitions as novelists.


Chris Smith, Culture Secretary, enjoys a bit of heavy metal

PARTY TIMES
LEATHER-CLAD Hells Angels rubbed shoulders with Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary, at the opening of the Barbican's year-long *Inventing America* festival. After the growls from the bikes had died down, John Tusa, the Barbican's top man, thanked the wrong sponsors — USAir instead of American Airlines. Delighting in the faux pas, the magnificent Mr Smith welcomed everyone to the South Bank. Both then departed before an ear-splitting session by an American punk band, Suicide, stirred the crowd.

Across town, Michael Heseltine rolled up to the *London First* reception for the capital's finest. As Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare and Steve Norris engaged in some pre-mayoral gladhanding, Hezza ruled himself out of the race: "I'm yesterday's man, hadn't you heard?" Doesn't that include most Tory politicians? "I couldn't possibly concur." Apparently, gardening now takes up much of the former Deputy Prime Minister's time: "We have some wonderful peacocks in the arboretum. When they are disturbed they go off like cruise missiles."

هكذا من الإصل

IN WASHINGTON'S WINGS

Other players ponder Clinton's crisis

The White House went yesterday, in the alleged phrase of Monica Lewinsky's, into denial. The President contemplated whether and how he should put his case to the country on television: and in the interim he did his best to suggest business as usual. His associates did their utmost to paint Kenneth Starr, the Whitewater special prosecutor, as a partisan inquisitor. Mrs Clinton has again been deployed to protect her husband's fragile reputation. The essential elements of a Clinton strategy have now surfaced. The annual State of the Union address, which Mr Clinton is scheduled to deliver to Congress on Tuesday night, was all but discarded as his defence took shape.

Washington is a cruel city with little purpose other than politics. Mr Clinton's problems have inevitably forced others to consider their position. The President may have a communications plan; but matters are largely in the hands of Ms Lewinsky and Mr Starr. The prospect, however small as yet, of a President driven from office effects two other pivotal figures, Vice-President Albert Gore Jr. and Newt Gingrich, the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Mr Gore faces a complex calculation. His political fortunes are intimately linked to those of the President. As his deputy and heir apparent he has little choice but to maintain the maximum level of public loyalty. Every word he utters will be scrutinised for the slightest indication that he is distancing himself from Mr Clinton. The sheer contrast, however, between his own unsullied private life and the racy reputation that Mr Clinton has long courted, could not be starker. He would not be human if he did not contemplate the possibility of his premature succession.

The dilemma for Mr Gore is the distinction between his own interests and those of Mr Clinton. He cannot estimate with any accuracy the damage that has been done to this Administration. If the President should fall, the Vice-President would much prefer it to be sooner rather than later. This would allow him to put his own stamp on the Oval Office. The example of Gerald Ford provides a salutary precedent. He began in an initial blaze of popularity but ultimately could not escape association with Richard Nixon.

Mr Gingrich is in an equally uncertain position. He and Mr Clinton have long been bitter opponents. In theory, he has much to gain and little to lose from the destruction of his nemesis. In practice, the Speaker, although an outstanding political operator with the most fertile mind in modern American politics, has endured his own disproportionate share of ethical difficulty. He would hardly relish presiding over a contentious impeachment process.

This leaves the Republicans in an odd position. They would privately prefer that Mr Clinton served out his term but under the constant shadow of scandal. This would weaken his capacity to resist their agenda. It might also result in substantial dividends in the congressional elections of this year and the presidential contest two years later. On balance this remains the most plausible outcome. That masterplan is subject to the moves of Mr Starr — a man no more under the control of the Speaker than the President.

Washington will wait and speculate. The rest of the United States probably has different priorities. Mr Gore and Mr Gingrich will be important actors in this drama. Yet the man who stands to make the most out of Mr Clinton's misfortunes does not reside in the American capital. If Americans in 2000 were in search of a candidate to restore dignity and integrity to the Oval Office, the person best positioned to exploit the contrast between Mr Clinton and his immediate predecessor would be George Bush Jr., Governor of Texas. That would be the final twist in this extraordinary saga.

BLAIR'S BEAST

Straw strides out for the sake of the party

Tony Blair came into government determined to strengthen its centre. Having witnessed the drift and ministerial infighting of the Major years, he decided to concentrate power in Downing Street. Cabinet was downgraded, decisions were taken in a tightknit group, and ministers were often overruled.

Now the Prime Minister has expressed annoyance that his colleagues are suffering from "departmentalitis", focusing too much on their own jobs at the expense of the bigger picture. This affliction is hardly surprising after the anti-collegiate beginning to his administration. The direct result of taking power back to Downing Street is that he (and to a lesser extent, Gordon Brown) have been seen as the sole exponents of the Government's overall direction — and that other ministers, sensing the exclusion, have decided to concentrate only on their own tasks.

Mr Blair's style of leadership has many merits: colleagues' differing interpretations of the true path are not jostling for attention as they did under the last Government. But there are dangers too. Although Mr Blair can afford to look commanding now, the same position could swiftly turn to isolation when his party hits the doldrums.

So he is wise to widen the base of policy formulation and dissemination. Yesterday Jack Straw was encouraged to deliver a speech that ranged further than his Home Office brief, touching on the fundamental values and principles of new Labour. The choice of Mr Straw is said to be a reminder to Mr Brown that there are other Blairites who can be trusted to lift their eyes above their day-to-day responsibilities.

Indeed, Mr Straw is one of the few in the Cabinet who is new Labour by instinct. He first suggested the abolition of Clause Four under John Smith. Others, such as John Prescott and David Blunkett, are converts who retain suspicions about elements of the project. Then there are old Right ministers, such as Jack Cunningham, who can rub along happily without a Blairite heart. Robin Cook, meanwhile, is still chafing.

The so-called "Big Four" group; Messrs Prescott, Brown and Cook alongside Mr Blair, are so named as much to soothe their competitive egos as to describe the extent of their influence. The exclusion of Mr Straw is due more to his loyalty and dependability than any low opinion from Number Ten. Because he is not seething with grudges, he has, if anything, been taken for granted. Yet his quiet efficiency at the Home Office and his conduct when his son was caught selling cannabis show that he deserves to be at the heart of Government.

Mr Blair can rely on Messrs Brown and Straw to reflect his views. Save on Europe, the three men have very similar outlooks. Now, however, the Prime Minister needs to work on those whose instincts do not naturally coincide with his. A speech from Mr Blunkett or Mr Prescott on the merits of welfare reform would help pull into line disgruntled MPs and party members.

The only ministers who actively support Mr Blair's hard choices are those vilified by the Left. The Prime Minister's decision to include Mr Blunkett and Frank Dobson on his welfare reform committee opens the possibility of widening that base of support. Now those ministers should make their loyalty known — as persuaders to the parts of the party that Mr Blair cannot reach.

A NOVEL DEPARTURE

The Foreign Office has never needed agents more

Bond was in the middle of instructing Pussy Galore in the finer points of palm piloting when the call came through on the other hot line. "Ah, James . . . I'm glad to see you're becoming *au fait* with modern power tools". It was M, with his exquisite timing, "I have a job for you which will require familiarity with the latest information technology."

An intrigued Bond rose from the divan, pausing only to rearrange his chinese silk gown and reach for a Sobranie. "I take it, M, you're referring to the Foreign Office computer crash which revealed that diplomats were taking megabytes out of the mainframe by writing their own works of fiction using our own internal internet — Her Majesty's Secret service provider".

"Good god, Bond, I thought the only people who knew were *me* and Q". "And the editor of *The Times* Diary, I'm afraid, he's got even better intelligence than Smersh," remarked Bond casually flicking through the papers for the supplement on President Clinton's mistresses which he had temporarily mixed up with his *Loaded* calendar.

"Well, Bond, before this gets any further I want you to download the stories and trace the authors — some of the still secret material would be dynamite if published and we may need all your skills as one of our best agents". Bond was monetarily perplexed, "To secure film and serial rights? I would have thought Swifty Lascar might be better. . . .". "No, Bond," M broke in testily, "we need an agent with a licence to kill — and not just the files. . .".

Leaving Pussy to practise with her little black box, Bond made his way over to his own desktop and began to surf through the efforts of his diplomatic colleagues to see which of them were budding Ian Flemings, Douglas Hurds or Graham Greenes. Those authors had used the expertise they acquired while working for the Queen to secure future royalties. The first file looked promising, a future Freddy Forsyth perhaps.

"The Hyena's unblinking gaze fastened with all the precision of a primed Sidewinder missile on his target — the unmistakably porcine figure of the French President. He was about to pin the *Legion D'Honneur* on an undeserving breast, his country's highest award for its rarest virtue — gallantry. Now was the time for him to show them what courage was. But, just as he raised the elegant mahogany stock of the .333 Godson and Goodman telescopic hunting rifle to his shoulder, the weapon of choice for Mossad operatives on plausibly deniable missions, he smelt almonds. . ."

Clearly our man in Transylvania had a future in publishing — what a pity, thought Bond, that it would have to be posthumous after trying to reveal too much of what the secret service had learnt about terror tactics. If there was a moral in the e-mail he was about to send to every embassy it would have to be this — if you must write about espionage, at least learn its tricks and cover your tracks. But, better still, if you yearn to write then choose romance, love stories are in fashion with the FO at the moment.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Housing need and threat to green belt

From the Chief Executive of the House Builders Federation

Sir, Far from champagne corks, the only things "popping" at the House Builders Federation this morning were eyes in disbelief at Simon Jenkins's article "Rape of the landscape" (January 21).

Little countryside will ever be developed for housing. Most new development will be in cities and towns or at their edges. The debate is therefore one about the future of urbanism, not the countryside. This is not surprising, as Britain is predominantly an urban nation, in which nearly 90 per cent of the population lives on less than 12 per cent of the land. That figure will hardly change in the foreseeable future.

The "household formation" projection on which Simon Jenkins pours such scorn is not a projection of housing need; it is just one — albeit important — building block to be given adequate weight at local level in deciding the housing policy figure for planning purposes.

The nature, condition, surplus or shortage of the existing stock, vacancy rates and major changes in the structure of local employment — eg, a new car plant — all also have to be considered by the local authority. The resultant housing figure is theirs, not Mr Prescott's, Mr Gummer's nor, still less, the HBF's.

Green-belt policy is unchanged and development in the green belt remains as rare as it has been over the last forty years. However, local authorities sometimes — rarely — decide that there is no alternative to its release.

This is the decision reached by Hertfordshire County Council at Stevenage, after a four-year search for other solutions, but an area near by, four times greater than that to be taken out, will be added to the green belt.

This addition is entirely consistent with the continuous expansion of the area covered by green belt, which has doubled since 1980. Indeed, for every acre of land, both brownfield and greenfield, taken for new housing since 1980, 7.5 acres have been added to the green belt.

Planning is not a matter of central diktat from Whitehall. The previous administration greatly reduced the powers of the Secretary of State in the process and enhanced local choice, and this Government has announced plans to further strengthen the regional dimension and the democratic accountability of planning (report, Business, January 15). It is local decision-making that produces the results which Simon Jenkins deplores .

Yours faithfully,
J. R. HUMBER,
Chief Executive,
The House Builders Federation,
82 New Cavendish Street, W1M 8AD.
January 21.

From the Director of the Civic Trust

Sir, Simon Jenkins does not help his case by dismissing housing need so lightly. A decent home is a much more fundamental requirement than more road space or opera houses and the demand which will be created by undeniable population growth and changes cannot be talked away.

Yes, more can and should be done to provide better homes in larger quantities in our existing urban areas, but cost is often a deterrent. More investment will be needed; which is why the Civic Trust advocates a package of new measures, including a levy on greenfield housing, with the receipts channelled into urban housing and regeneration.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL GWILLIAM,
Director, Civic Trust,
17 Carlton House Terrace,
London SW1Y 5AW.
January 21.

From Mr Christopher Leaver

Sir, I would add one point to Simon Jenkins's excellent article.

The houses being built in the green belt and throughout the countryside seem to me to be mainly three and four-bedroom dwellings with gardens; whereas we are told that what is required is accommodation for increasing numbers of single households. Common sense suggests that the real need is for one or two-bedroom apartments in centres with good public transport links and cultural infrastructure — which is present in the towns but not in the countryside.

This seems to be a clear case of a market being producer-led rather than demand-led.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER LEAVER,
Riverhill Lodge,
Fittleworth, West Sussex RH20 1JY.
January 21.

From Mr Reg Kimpton

Sir, How refreshing to read Simon Jenkins's challenge to the targets set for new homes.

Providing for anticipated lifestyle changes is surely to encourage such change. Not so long ago it was customary to defer marrying until accommodation could be obtained, with a further wait before raising a family. I make no moral judgment — merely that economically this should be the order of events.

Yours etc,
REG KIMPTON,
Clifton House,
67 London Road,
Whitchurch, Hampshire RG28 7LX.
January 22.

Ted Hughes's 'thunderbolt' in memory of Sylvia Plath

From Dr Peter Wilson

Sir, Your excellent preview of Ted Hughes's *Birthday Letters* and Andrew Motion's account of the calumny Hughes has had to face since the suicide of his wife ("A thunderbolt from the blue", January 17), recalls the fate of that other great English literary husband of the 20th century, Leonard Woolf. He too has been part-blamed for his wife's suicide. His dourness and severity are said to have been a constant source of oppression which, along with the onset of war and her lifelong hypersensitivity to criticism, led to Virginia's final, and fatal, descent into madness.

Anyone familiar with Leonard Woolf's masterful autobiography and some of the more measured works of the Bloomsbury industry will know that this charge is far from the truth. His love and affection for Virginia had a silent depth which continued long after her death. He nurtured her posthumous literary reputation with the same quiet constancy with which he had nurtured her creative genius. On the more intimate aspects of Virginia's emotional life he kept a dignified silence — despite persistent and lucrative invitations to break it.

The parallels with Hughes and Plath are striking. Am I right in thinking that in the 1970s and 1980s a rapidly developing feminist taste for iconography gave rise to a need to find a male oppressor behind every female tragedy?

Yours sincerely,
P. C. WILSON,
London School of Economics
and Political Science,
Department of International
Relations,
Houghton Street, WC2A 2AE.
January 19.

From Mr Philip J. Gray

Sir, Ted Hughes has surpassed all expectations with the forthcoming publication of *Birthday Letters*. Little did I realise the intense nature of his relationship with Plath until I read the engaging and perceptive article by Erica Wagner (January 17).

Fulbright Scholars sets the tone for a relationship that was complex and *18 Rugby Street* illustrates the intense nature of that relationship as Hughes and Plath meet for the first time in London.

I feel sure that the debate surrounding Hughes and Plath will continue without conclusion.

Yours sincerely,
P. J. GRAY,
6 Grafton Road, Bedford MK40 1JD.
January 20.

From Miss Diana L. Dykes

Sir, Standing out — for me — in Ted Hughes's poem *Pink Wool Knitted Dress* (January 19) were the words:

Your mother, brave even in this US Foreign
Affairs gamble
Acted all bridesmaids and all guests.
Even — magnanimity — represented
My family . . .

I am heartily glad that so courageous and gallant a spirit as Aurelia Schober Plath is accorded a well deserved meed of praise. Life was hard for her, as a widow in straitened circumstances with two children to educate.

She was my close correspondent from 1978 to 1992, by which time she had to dictate letters owing to failing health and near blindness. I cherish her many letters, owe her an enormous debt, and do not forget her.

Yours sincerely,
DIANA L. DYKES,
10 The Courtyard, Buxshalls,
Lindfield, West Sussex RH16 2QY.
January 20.

From Mr R. P. E. Ascham

Sir, Am I the only one in all this euphoria who thinks that Ted Hughes doesn't write poetry at all?

Yours sincerely,
R. P. E. ASCHAM,
64 Bower Street, Bedford MK40 3RE.
January 21.

From Mr John Etherington

Sir, I thank you for your exclusive presentation of Ted Hughes's *Birthday Letters*, and for giving this masterful work the attention it so rightly deserves. I also wish to commend the author on his skilful use of astrological language in poems such as *St Botolph's* (January 17).

It would seem to be more than chance that the book is published on January 29 — the day that the planet Neptune enters Aquarius. (In the symbolism of astrology, Neptune is the ruler of poetry and the sign of Aquarius has much to do with collective awareness.) This volume undoubtedly heralds a wide interest in the work of Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath, and may spark a renewed appreciation of poetry in general.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN ETHERINGTON,
Midheaven Bookshop,
396 Caledonian Road, N1 1DN.
January 20.

From Mrs Sheila Harrison

Sir, I read with interest your report about Ted Hughes's *Birthday Letters*. I believe the "girlfriend" mentioned in the poem *St Botolph's* may have been one of my closest friends at school, with whom I have since lost touch.

Shirley Edmonds was in her second year at Newnham reading English when she met Ted Hughes. The relationship lasted from the summer term of 1955 until the spring of 1956, when Hughes met Sylvia Plath. I remember Shirley describing to me, during the Easter vacation, the incident when a girl came up to Ted at a party and bit his face.

Shirley was bitterly upset by the ending of her affair with Hughes — he refers to the girlfriend's "hissing rage in a doorway" — and as soon as she had taken her degree she left for Canada, where her cultured English voice apparently qualified her for a job with the Bell Telephone Company, selling telephones.

Yours faithfully,
SHEILA HARRISON,
23 Saxon Way,
Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 1LG.

From Mr Anthony Thwaite

Sir, Libby Purves ("Lifting Plath's bell jar", January 20) will be pleased to know that two of Frieda Hughes's poems *have* been published. *Three Old Ladies* and *Nothing* can be found in the June/July 1997 number of Alan Ross's *London Magazine*.

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY THWAITE,
The Mill House,
Low Tharston, Norfolk NR15 2YN.
January 20.

Spelling howlers

From the Chairman of The Queen's English Society

Sir, The list of 142 spelling howlers compiled by Bernard Richards, formerly of Brasenose College (report, January 20), is typical of today's dreadful standards of English teaching. Yet I heard Professor Jean Aitchison of Oxford University say on television (BBC1 Southeast News, January 20), referring to the stress students face when taking exams: "I would rather they made mistakes in their spelling than in their thoughts." What woolly thoughts she voices.

If children are taught spelling and grammar properly at an early stage, preferably in primary school, examination stress is reduced because students are confident of their ability to write well-constructed, properly spelt sentences. More important, they are provided with basic communication skills for life.

Children are quite capable of understanding nouns, verbs, adjectives and simple punctuation from a very young age. For them not to have this knowledge is a serious handicap.

Yours grammatically (I hope),
MICHAEL PLUMBE,
Chairman,
The Queen's English Society,
104 Drive Mansions, SW6 5JH.
January 20.

From the Reverend David W. Hoskin

Sir, A recent professional report in connection with St Mary's Church, Beverley, referred to "The North Isle Knave". I am at a loss to know who this could be.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID HOSKIN,
St Mary's Vicarage,
Molescroft Road,
Beverley, East Yorkshire HU17 7DX.
david@hoskin.demon.co.uk
January 21.

Beckett's flat

From Dr Rodney Leach

Sir, Are "grace and favour" flats, whether in Admiralty House (report, January 22) or elsewhere, regarded as taxable benefits by the Inland Revenue? If not, why not?

Could a simple renaming of a company flat provide a modest tax-free benefit for hard-working executives in non-political occupations?

Yours faithfully,
RODNEY LEACH,
Dockwray Cottage,
Grasmere,
Nr Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 9QD.
January 22.

From Mrs Jane Dyson

Sir, Regarding the £160,000 spent on Margaret Beckett's flat refurbishment, I heard it said on the radio yesterday that she and her husband are down-to-earth, ordinary people who make do with unpretentious, inexpensive caravan holidays.

However, the fact that they are frugal with their own money and extravagant with taxpayers' money is clearly a condemnation rather than a commendation.

Yours faithfully,
JANE DYSON,
The Croft, Kellfield Avenue,
Low Fell, Tyne and Wear NE9 5YP.
January 23.

Japan and PoWs

From Mr L. E. Schofield

Sir, As a PoW of the Japanese I worked on the Siam/Burma railway all the way from south to north.

The brutality of the Japanese and their Korean henchmen is well known, and has not been exaggerated in postwar reports.

However, I think it is shameful and demeaning that, 50 years on, we should still be begging the Japanese to apologise and pay compensation (letters, January 19, 21, 22).

Yours faithfully,
L. E. SCHOFIELD,
9 Bernard Crescent,
Hunstanton, Norfolk PE36 6ER.
January 23.

Scots parliament

From Mr Barry S. Hyman

Sir, Prince Charles has many qualities, but he is not Prince Albert and this is not 1851, a time for obsequiousness and bowing the knee (report, "Prince asked to help in design of Scottish parliament", January 20).

The UK's many talented architects should be allowed to submit plans to a body of their peers without someone clearly wedded to convention and tradition — fine in their place — calling the shots to exclude the possibility of the radical, original thinking that this parliament of the 21st century offers.

Yours faithfully,
BARRY HYMAN,
4 Priory View, Bushey Heath,
Hertfordshire WD2 3QZ.
barry@bonshie.demon.co.uk
January 20.

The right stuff

From Major John FitzGerald

Sir, It is obvious from today's letters that all that is needed for successful duvet stuffing is ingenuity and common sense — I personally find having a German wife to be an additional and possibly unfair advantage.

I am distressed to think that we in North Yorkshire are to be deemed to be so lacking in any of these attributes that special schooling has to be laid on.

Yours etc,
JOHN FitzGERALD,
68 Heworth Village, York YO3 0AL.
January 19.

From Sir Rowland Whitehead

Sir, Married to a Norwegian for 44 years I have had a pretty good time. Till, that is, one comes to duvet-changing. Mockery fills the air.

I think it is in the genes.

Yours helplessly,
ROWLAND WHITEHEAD,
Sutton House,
Chiswick Mall, W4 2PR.
January 19.

From Mr David Tribe

Sir, Three cheers for Derwent May ("Duvets mean sleeping with the enemy", January 14). No one would expect a summer guest to arrive in a winter coat, but many a hotelier will provide a 12-tog duvet for the warmest of nights. A campaign to bring back the flexible comfort of the British blanket and end the tyranny of the universal duvet is long overdue.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID TRIBE,
25 Cliveden Road, SW19 3RD.
January 14.

From Mr Paul Colgrave

Sir, What a mess Derwent May's bedroom must be, with blankets strewn everywhere.

Duvets are a great solution to numerous problems. I sleep in a king-size bed with my partner, and we both have single quilts of different tog values to sort out temperatures. Their main advantage though is removal of the possession problem — the constant tug-of-war which results in lack of sleep, stiff necks/backs from draughts (in mid-battle a double duvet or sheet/blanket combo pulled tight opens a huge hole that lets cold air in) and bad moods in the morning.

Yours etc,
PAUL COLGRAVE,
6 Bickerton Road,
Altrincham, Cheshire WA14 4LA.
paul@colgrave.u-net.com
January 14.

From Mr John R. Sharp

Sir, Having got the wretched thing in, how do I prevent the duvet migrating laterally within the cover so that I am not left insulated with only the thickness of the cover while the wife is double lagged?

Yours faithfully,
JOHN R. SHARP,
55 Twining Brook Road,
Cheadle Hulme,
Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 5RJ.
January 20.

From Mr Michael Banister

Sir, My wife and I endorse the advice given by Professor Bond (letter, January 19). We throw our duvet over the Banisters every night.

Yours eponymously,
MICHAEL BANISTER,
102 Ladbrook Road,
Solihull, West Midlands B91 3RS.
January 19.

Weekend Money letters, page 61

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046.
e-mail to: *letters@the-times.co.uk*

هكذا من الإصل

COURT CIRCULAR

SANDRINGHAM, NORFOLK
January 23: By command of The Queen, Vice Admiral Sir James Weatherall (Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps) called upon His Excellency Señor Patricio Maldonado at 3 Hans Crescent, London SW1, this morning in order to bid farewell to His Excellency upon relinquishing his appointment as Ambassador from the Republic of Ecuador to the Court of St James's.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
January 23: The Prince Edward today continued his visit to Tokyo, Japan, in support of the Festival UK 98.

His Royal Highness this morning called upon the Crown Prince and Crown Princess of Japan.

The Prince Edward afterwards attended a meeting with the directors of the Japan Foundation at the Ark Mori Building, Minato Ku, at which Prince Takamado was also present.

His Royal Highness, Trustee, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award International Foundation, this afternoon attended a Lunch at Maxim's de Paris, Ginza, Chuo Ku, in support of the Award in Japan.

The Prince Edward later visited the Royal Academy exhibition *New Urban Environments* at Ozone, Shinjuku.

His Royal Highness subsequently called upon Prince and Princess Tomohito of Mikasa.

The Prince Edward later attended the Japanese première of Kenneth Branagh's film of *Hamlet* at Nichigeki Theatre, Chiyoda Ku.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
January 23: The Princess Royal, Colonel-in-Chief, Royal Corps of Signals and Royal Logistic Corps, today visited the Base Ordnance Depot, Donnington, Shropshire, and opened the Ptarmigan Training Centre, Venning Barracks.

Her Royal Highness this afternoon opened the new extension at The Princess Royal Hospital, Apley Castle, Telford, and was received by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Shropshire (Mr Algernon Heber-Percy).

Luncheon

Atlantic Council
Mr John Spellar, Under Secretary of State for Defence, was the speaker at the annual joint luncheon of the Trades Union Committee for European and Transatlantic Understanding (TACETU) and the Atlantic Council held yesterday in Grantham to mark the beginning of their joint weekend conference. Mr Alan Lee Williams, director of the council, presided.

Service dinner

H4C
Major R.S.T. Murphy, Commander of the Signal Squadron, Honourable Artillery Company, presided at the Squadron's annual dinner held at Armoury House last night. Mr Michael Cassidy was the principal guest. 2nd Lieutenant Tim Nicholson also spoke.

Dinner

English-Speaking Union
Baroness Fookes was the guest of honour and speaker at a dinner of the Hastings branch of the English-Speaking Union held last night in Hastings. Mrs Veronica McVey, president of the branch and Deputy Chairman of the ESU National Council for England and Wales, was *in the chair*. Mrs Margaret Terrill also spoke.

Weekend anniversaries

TODAY
BIRTHS: Hadrian, Roman emperor 117-138, Italica, Spain, 76AD; Sir John Vanbrugh, dramatist and architect, London, baptised this day, 1664; William Congreve, dramatist, Bardsey, Yorkshire, 1670; Frederick II the Great, King of Prussia 1740-86, Berlin, 1712; Pierre de Beaumarchais, dramatist, Paris, 1732; Charles James Fox, statesman, London, 1749; Muzio Clementi, pianist and composer, Rome, 1752; Sir Edwin Chadwick, physician and social reformer, Longsight, Lancashire, 1800; Sir Thomas Blamey, Field Marshal, Wagga-Wagga, New South Wales, 1884; Keith Douglas, poet, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, 1920.
DEATHS: James Ralph, writer, London, 1762; Adam Black, publisher and politician, Edinburgh, 1874; Lord Randolph Churchill, statesman, London, 1895; Margaret Hungerford, novelist, Bandon, Cork, 1897; Edward MacDowell, composer, New York, 1908; Amadeo Modigliani, painter and sculptor, Paris, 1920; Sir Winston Churchill, Prime Minister 1940-45 and 1951-55, London, 1965.
King Henry III married Eleanor of Provence, 1236.
Conscription was introduced in Britain, 1916.

TOMORROW
BIRTHS: St Edmund Campion, Jesuit martyr, London, 1540; Robert Boyle, chemist, Lissmore, Co Waterford, 1627; Joseph Lagrange, mathematician, Turin, 1736; Robert Burns, poet, Alloway, 1759; Sir Francis Burdett, politician, 1770; William McGillivray, naturalist, Old Aberdeen, 1796; John Arbuthnot Fisher, 1st Baron Fisher, Admiral of the Fleet, Ceylon, 1841; William Somerset Maugham, novelist and dramatist, Paris, 1874; Virginia Woolf, novelist and critic, London, 1882; Wilhelm Furtwangler, conductor, Berlin, 1886; Witold Lutoslawski, composer, Warsaw, 1913.
DEATHS: Robert Burton, author of *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Oxford, 1640; William Shield, composer, London, 1829; Dorothy Wordsworth, writer, Rydal, Cumbria, 1855; Frederic Leighton, Lord Leighton, President of the Royal Academy 1878-96, Kensington, 1896; Ouida (pseudonym of Louise de la Ramée), novelist, Viareggio, Italy, 1908.
King Edward III acceded to the throne, 1327.
The London Chamber of Commerce met for the first time, 1882.
The League of Nations, forerunner of the UN was founded, 1919.

ADRIAN SHERRATT

Elizabeth Dunphy and Lieutenant Commander Andrew Loring from Puckeridge, Hertfordshire, who have recently announced their engagement

School news

Dean Close School
The Bollinger Club held its Lent Term Dinner on Monday, January 19. Mr Jeremy Irons was the guest of honour and speaker. Also present were Mr C.M. Kenyon, President, Mr L.S. Allington, Senior Member, Elizabeth Doust, Chairman, and the Headmaster and Mrs Bacon.

St Mary's School Ascot Old Girls Association
Members of the AOGA are invited to the annual London reunion which will take place on Wednesday, January 28, at The Chelsea Gardener, 125 Sydney Street, London SW3, from 7pm to 9.30pm.

Supper

Caledonian Club
A Burns' Night Supper was held last night at the Caledonian Club. Viscount Weir proposed the toast to *The Immortal Memory of Robert Burns* and Mr Bo Ramfors proposed the toast to *The Lassies*. Miss Moira Fraser replied.

Church news

The Rev Piers Warburton, Vicar, Hartley Wintney w Elvetham and Winchfield and Dogmersfield (Winchester) to retire February 28. The Rev Michael Ward, Rector, Gunthorpe, Bale, Field Dalling, Saxlingham and Sharrington (Norwich) to retire January 31.

Other appointments
Mr Charles Mynors, Barrister, to be Deputy Chancellor (Worcester). Mr Colin Udall, Youth Outreach Worker, Yardley (Birmingham): to be Leicester Diocesan Youth Officer (Leicester).

Memorial services

Mr Richard Warwick
A memorial service for Mr Richard Warwick (Mr Richard Winter), actor, was held yesterday at St James's Piccadilly. The Rev Donald Reeves officiated and Mr Michael Williams read the lesson.

Mr Giles Winter, brother, read from *Richard's diaries*. Miss Zoe Wanamaker read *Pied Beauty* by Gerald Manley Hopkins, Miss Joanna David read from T.H. White's *The Once and Future King*, Miss Joanna Lumley read *When I have Fears* by Noel Coward, Dame Judi Dench read from *The Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan and Sir Derek Jacobi read from *Cymbeline* by William Shakespeare.

Sir Ian McKellen read a tribute written by Mr Sean Matthias and Mr Keith Baxter gave an address.

Miss Susan Penhaligon, Miss Sara Kestelman and Mr Brian Holden paid tribute.

Mr Robert Meadmore, accompanied by Mr Mathew Freeman, piano, sang Ivor Novello's *We'll Gather Lilacs*. Among others present were:
Mr D.B. Winter (father), Mr Jeremy Winter (brother), Mr Robert Reed, Miss Finty Williams, Sam Williams, Mr Chris Hawley, Mr Alan Bates, Mr Kenneth Cranham, Mr Ned Sherrin, Mr Gawn Grainger, Mr Christopher Timothy, Mr Mark Whitley, Miss Adrienne Corri, Mr Frank Barrie, Mr Ian Hutchinson, Mr Donald Pickering, Mr Peter Jukes, Mr David Meyer.
Mr and Mrs Mark Rogers, Miss Hannah Rogers, Mr Dafydd Rogers, Miss Mylanwi Rogers, Mrs C Thomas, Mr Paul Taylor, Miss Lori Elmore, Mr Richard Clifford, Miss Caroline Burr, Mr Patrick Garland, Mr Noel Davis, Miss Patricia Maynard, Mr Peter Straker, Miss Maybe Jehu, Miss Jill Kerman, Miss Diana Parry, Mr Roger Lloyd Pack, Mr Kurt Grant, Mr Jonathan Scott, Mr Didier Jones, Mr Peter Jones, Miss Adrienne Spanier, Mr John Ryan, Miss Ruth Halliday-Holden, Mr Garry Raymond, Miss Wanda Ventham, Mr Timothy Carton.
Mr Humphrey Barclay, Dr Brian Horne, Mr Peter Stenson, Miss Patricia Noble, Mr M Tyrrell, Mr Ian Liston, Mr Derek Granger, Mr Jack Straw and Miss Gail Billings, Mr Mark McAuley, Mr Adolf Wood and Miss Dawn Keeler, Miss Joanna McCallum, Mr Geoff Thacker, Mrs Lisa Parkes (Walton Theatre Collection), Mr David McGillivary (*The Guardian*) and many other friends.

Air Vice-Marshal W E Oulton
A service of thanksgiving for the life of Air Vice-Marshal Wilfrid Ewart Oulton was held yesterday at St Clement Danes, Strand, WC2. The Rev David Mackenzie, Resident Chaplain, RAF, officiated, assisted by the Rev Leslie Brant. Marshal of the RAF Sir Michael Beetham read the lesson. Air Commodore A.E. Neal, Air Officer Maritime Air, RAF Northwood, also representing the Chief of the Air Staff, read the *Funeral Oration of Pericles (429 BC)* and Air Vice-Marshal B.H. Newton, Chairman, the Grapple Association, read *High Flight* by Pilot Officer John Gillespie Magee. Air Commodore P.D. Oulton, son, gave an address. Among others present were:
Mrs Oulton (widow), Mr and Mrs R F Oulton, Mr and Mrs M L Oulton (sons and daughters-in-law), Mrs P D Oulton (daughter-in-law), Mr and Mrs A P Oulton, Mr and Mrs M S Prowse, Mr A L Oulton, Mr R P M Oulton, Mr E J C G Oulton, Miss Nicola Oulton, Christopher Oulton (grandchildren), Tate Oulton, Louka Oulton, *Quinn Oulton* (great-grandchildren), Miss Yvonne Oulton, Miss Shirley Oulton, Mr and Mrs George Watson, Mr Lionel Oulton, Mr Tony Oulton and other members of the family.
Lord Hurnsworth, Marshal of the RAF Sir Denis Spotswood, Air Chief Marshal Sir David Evans, Air Chief Marshal Sir Roger Palin, Controller RAFBF, Air Chief Marshal Sir Neil and Lady Wheeler, Air Chief Marshal Sir Lewis Hodges, Air Marshal Sir John Curtiss and Lady Curtiss, Air Vice-Marshal Sir Brian Stanbridge, Sir John Chamley, Lady Baker, Lady Kyle, Air Vice-Marshal A L Roberts, Chairman, Coastal Command association.
Air Vice-Marshal John Price, Air Vice-Marshal David Blair-Oliphant, Mrs B H Newton, Group Captain Peter L Harris, Group Captain A Carey, Squadron Leader John Cordery, Mrs Leslie Brant, Mr and Mrs David Emmerson, Air Commodore D.W. Broughton (Institute of Navigation), Group Captain (Coastal Command Association) and Mrs Larkin, representatives of the Grapple Association and many other friends and former colleagues.

Latest wills

Baroness Llewelyn-Davies of Hastoe, of London NW5, left estate valued at £1,986,712 net.

Sir Alec Ogilvie, Chairman of Powell Duffryn 1969-78, of Lindfield, West Sussex, left estate valued at £484,048 net.
He left shares in his residuary estate to King Edward VII's Hospital for Officers, the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind and Marie Curie Cancer Care.

Sir Kenneth Lewis, Conservative MP for Rutland and Stamford 1959-83, and Stamford and Spalding 1983-87, of Preston Oakham, Rutland, left estate valued at £995,554 net.
He left £1,000 each to the Church of St Peter and St Paul, Preston Oakham, Grange Road Baptist Church, Jarrow, Tyne and Wear, and the RAF Association; £500 each to Church Missionary Society, the Intercontinental Church Society, and St John's Presbyterian Church, Northwood, Middlesex.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr J.R. Alford and Miss D.N. Singarayer
The engagement is announced between Justin Richard, younger son of Mr and Mrs J. Alford, of Herefordshire, and Diella Natasha, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs W. Singarayer, of Finchley, London.

Mr J.P. Bidgood and Miss A.J. Styring
The engagement is announced between Julian, son of Mr Jeffrey Bidgood and the late Mrs Bidgood, of Potters Bar, and Angela, daughter of Mr and Mrs Robert Styring, of Newton Ferrers, Devon.

Mr A.C.T. Clemett and Miss D.K. Connor
The engagement is announced between Adam, second son of the Rev and Mrs Peter Clemett, of Romsey, Hampshire, and Debbie, only daughter of Mr and Mrs Philip Connor, of Hastings, East Sussex.

Mr G.K.R. Everest and Miss J.E. Blayney
The engagement is announced between Giles, son of Squadron Leader and Mrs Keith Everest, of Chevington, Suffolk, and Joanna, daughter of Mrs Sybil Blayney, of Bradley, Hampshire, and the late Mr Michael Blayney.

Mr M.E. Hammond and Miss A.K. Kretschmann
The engagement is announced between Michael Edmund, only son of Mr and Mrs Edmund Hammond, of Warwick, Bermuda, and Ann Katrin, only daughter of Mr and Mrs Axel Kretschmann, of Dusseldorf, Germany.

Mr N.C. Lawson and Miss S.K. Fuller
The engagement is announced between Nigel, son of Mr and Mrs Bernard Lawson, of Marsham, Norfolk, and Susan, daughter of Mr and Mrs Thomas Fuller, of Amesbury, Wiltshire.

Mr K. Muhmood and Miss A. Peters
The forthcoming marriage is announced between Khalid, second son of Mr and Mrs M. Muhmood, of Kuwait, and Arabella, only daughter of Mr and Mrs G. Peters, of Shorne Ridgeway, Kent.

Mr M.G. Nestor and Miss C.F.M.W. Benn
The engagement is announced between Michael, son of Michael Nestor and the late Martha Nestor, of Croydon, Surrey, and Frances, daughter of David and June Wedgwood Benn, of Blackheath, London.

The Hon D.W. Petre and Miss M.V. Perry
The engagement is announced between Dominic, elder son of Lord and Lady Petre, and Marisa, only daughter of Mr and Mrs Anthony Perry.

Mr J.M.J. Strickland and Miss E.C. Rudgard
The engagement is announced between John, son of Mr and Mrs Michael Strickland, of Hilton, Cambridge, and Emily, youngest daughter of Dr D. Lee Rudgard, of Hong Kong and Switzerland, and Mr H.A. Rudgard, of Allington, Wiltshire.

Mr B.I. Suhr and Miss V.R. Harry
The engagement is announced between Brendon, son of Mr and Mrs Ian Suhr, of Hobart, Tasmania, and Vanessa, daughter of Lieutenant Colonel and Mrs M.J.H. Harry, of Trelleck, near Monmouth.

Lieutenant M.T.H. Tomlyn, RN, and Miss E. Wyatt
The engagement is announced between Matthew Thomas Hedley, only son of Mr and Mrs A.H. Tomlyn, of Thame, Oxfordshire, and Emma, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs E.D. Wyatt, of Worminghall, Buckinghamshire.

Weekend birthdays

TODAY: Mr Eric Ashton, rugby league coach, 63; Mr Harry Brett, former general secretary, Prison Governors Association, 51; Lieutenant-General Sir Anthony Denison-Smith, 56; Mr Neil Diamond, singer, 53; Mr Bamber Gascoigne, author and broadcaster, 63; Mr Peter Laister, company director, 69; Mr M.J. Le May, banker, 40; Dr Desmond Morris, zoologist, writer and broadcaster, 70; Sir Donald Murray, former Lord Justice of Appeal, 75; Dr Ian Oliver, Chief Constable, Grampian, 58; Lord Savile, 79; Dr Jane Somerville, cardiologist, 65; Mr John Wadham, director, Liberty, 46; the Most Rev J.A. Ward, Archbishop of Cardiff, 69; Air Commodore Sir Archie Winskill, former Captain of The Queen's Flight, 81.
TOMORROW: The Rev Professor G.W. Anderson, FBA, theologian, 85; Sir Tom Arnold, former MP, 51; Mr Raymond Baxter, writer and broadcaster, 76; Viscount Blakenham, 60; the Most Rev Dermot Clifford, Archbishop of Cashel and Emly, 59; Vice-Admiral Sir David Clutterbuck, 85; the Earl of Coventry, 64; Miss Emma Freud, broadcaster, 36; Sir Paul Girolami, former chairman, Glaxo Holdings, 72; Sir Brian Hayes, Deputy Commissioner, Metropolitan Police, 58; Professor Sir Geoffrey Lloyd, FBA, Master, Darwin College, Cambridge, 65; Sir James Mellon, former diplomat, 69; Sir David Nicholas, former chairman, ITN, 68; Lord Nicholls of Birkenhead, 65; Professor D.D. Raphael, philosopher, 82; Air Commodore A.A. Reed, former director, RAF Nursing Services, 68; Mr David Shattock, Chief Constable, Avon and Somerset, 62; Mr Tom Shebbeare, director, The Prince's Trust and The Royal Jubilee Trusts, 46; Miss Angela Thorne, actress, 59; Professor Edward Ullendorff, FBA, 78; Admiral Sir Peter White, 79.

ON THIS DAY

January 24, 1989

Salvador Dali, the supreme self-publicist who gave surrealism respectability, died nine years ago leaving a legacy of muddle over his later works, with stories that the artist had signed hundreds of blank sheets of paper just to make money.

Salvador Dali: the painter who turned his life into a work of art

BY JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

SALVADOR DALI'S most individual and valuable gift was undoubtedly his ability to combine work of genuine artistic quality with an extraordinary skill in self-publicity. Like his friend, and on one occasion collaborator, Alfred Hitchcock, or like, in a later generation, Andy Warhol, he could both sell himself and deliver what his promotion promised.

The question, of course, in all such cases, is how creditably the balance was established to begin with and how securely it was maintained over the years. In Dali's case it is peculiarly difficult to decide, since, like all true surrealists, he did not regard his life and his art as occupying separate components: they had of necessity to spill over into one another.

As Cocteau chose to regard everything he did as "poetry" so Dali saw everything he did as art, in a sense he was his own greatest artwork. The proponents of conceptual art and performance art in the 70s might well have looked to him as their master: not that they did, since in Dali's self-creation there was always a strong element of iconoclastic humour, and most conceptual art has been of an awesome solemnity. But Dali, at least until religion got him, regarded the way he wore his famous moustache as equally an art-work with his most laboured-over painting, his silliest public statements and writings as much a part of his total artistic gesture as his most presumably serious artistic self-searchings.

It was surrealist principle, after all, that made the artist the centre of his work: his unconscious might or might not be part of the collective unconscious, but his prime aim had to be to give it free rein, to make his art as close to automatic writing as possible.

Hence, almost throughout Dali's career we get a constant parade of his psycho-sexual preoccupations, with certain images constantly recurring and transforming themselves. Think of Dali and you think of melting time pieces draped over the landscape like fried eggs, of various parts of the body (often vaguely phallic) supported by crutches, of women converted into chest of drawers, of elephants towering on grasshopper legs, of a telephone shaped like a lobster or a sofa shaped like Mae West's lips.

Anything was grist to his mill, provided it appealed to him. He became obsessed with Millep's *The Angelus*, and painted innumerable variations on it. He loved nineteenth century French Kitsch art and up they all came in his paintings. The face and figure of his wife Gala were inescapable. And since lack of quality control was a firm surrealist principle - selection amounted to self-censorship - he quite often wasted time and paint on ideas few others thought worth the effort.

He was, indeed, technically a painter of considerable, slightly slippery skill ... The only question was the value of what he wanted to do.

In the history of 20th-century art it seems unlikely he will end up very highly rated ... Probably his greatest contribution and influence will come to be seen as his flair for publicity ...

AP/TOPHAM

Dali in the mood to celebrate — with Regine, the French nightclub singer

BMDS: 0171 680 6880
PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

PERSONAL COLUMN

TRADE: 0171 481 1982
FAX: 0171 481 9313

Look after the flock of God whose shepherds you are; do it, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have it; not for gain but out of sheer devotion. 1 Peter 5 : 2

BIRTHS

BIRD - On 4th January, to Gill and Richard, a son, Alexander and two daughters, Suzanne and Helena.

CHESHIRE - On January 22nd 1998, to Richard and Jane (née Whitehair), a daughter, Victoria Louisa, a sister for Rebecca and Charlotte.

COLES - On January 20th at The Portland Hospital, to Betsy and Ian, a daughter, Hannah Elizabeth Jane, a sister for Katie and Benjamin.

ELLIOTT - On 22nd January, to Joanna (née Charlton) and Paul, a daughter, Fiona Caroline.

JENTGEN-HAVERS - Thomas and Louisa are proud to announce the birth on 22nd January of their first child, a son. Many thanks to all at U.C.H.

PERKINS - On January 9th, to Michelle and Paul, a son, Frederick Paul, a brother for Sam and Laura.

ROLFE - On January 17th at The Portland Hospital, to Janet (née Ent) and Andrew, a son, Charles Edward Burnett-Ent.

RUSSELL - On January 16th at The Portland Hospital, to Karen and Stuart, a daughter, Catriona Mae.

THIRSK - On 12th January, to Amanda and Jeremy, a daughter, Rachelle Imogen Olivia, a sister for Natasha and Madeleine.

DEATHS

ANTILL - George (A.G.A.) suddenly on 12th January aged 82 years, dear husband of Irene. Family funeral has taken place.

BRAIN - On 20th January, 1998 suddenly in hospital in Guildford, aged 84, Cyril Geoffrey Brain, T.D., Mentioned in Despatches, Major, Wiltshire Regiment G.H.Q. Liaison Regiment (Phantom) 1943/45, Staff Manager, Lloyds Bank, dearly loved and loving husband of Iris and of the late Betty (née Langton), much loved father and father-in-law of Carolyn and David, John and Charmian, Angela and Michael and stepfather of Diana and husband Merrick. Sadly missed by his seven grandchildren and his four stepgrandchildren and great-grandchildren. Funeral and Thanksgiving Service at St John's Church, Epsom Road, Merrow, Guildford on Thursday, 29th January at 2pm followed by cremation attended by family only. No flowers please but donations, if desired, to The Children's Society, Edward Rudolph House, Margery Street, London WC1X 0JL.

BULMAN - On 22nd January Vera, widow of William Bulman, mother of Richard, Mary and the late Charles. Funeral at St John's, Menton, France, 26th January 10.30am.

CLARK - Cynthia Muriel on 16th January in her 91st year. Late of Hove, Sussex. Sister of Rosemary and aunt to Gillian and Michael. Librarian of the United University Club 1930-1967. Member of the parochial church council and sacristan at St John's, Palmeira Square, Hove for many years. Funeral at the Oxford Crematorium, Headington on 29th January at 12 noon.

EDWARDS - Jessie in Dover, mother and wife of the late William (Bill), on January 18th, after a stroke at home on Christmas Day, aged 85. Funeral private. Much loved mother and grandmother. Donations, if desired, to Woodland or Rainforest charities.

LOWE - Ann (née Wyse) on 21st January suddenly but peacefully, dearly loved wife of Brian and mother of James and Perpa. Funeral Service 12 noon Tuesday 27th January at St Just in Roseland, Cornwall. Family flowers only. If desired donations to Insulin Dependent Diabetes Trust c/o Treguinna, 49 Kenwyn Street, Truro, (01872) 273568. Memorial Service 12 noon Thursday 12th February at St James's, Hepthorn, West Sussex.

McPHERSON HEARD - Rose, died 21st January, aged 86. Former Rector of Hatch Beauchamp, Somerset. Much loved by his family. Cremation (family only), followed by Requiem Service at St Benet's Church, Cambridge on Wednesday 28th January at 3 pm. No flowers. Donations if wished for a gift to Addenbrookes Hospital. Funeral Directors: Harry Williams and Sons, 7 Victoria Park, Cambridge, CB4 3EJ. Tel: 01223 359480.

MOORE - Agneta (née Hechtenlutz), widow of Lieutenant A.D.W. Moore, Royal Navy, loved mother of James and Michael and grandmother of seven grandchildren, peacefully on 22nd January 1998 at Wing Common Nursing Home, Reigate, at the age of 85. Funeral Service at St Matthew's Church, Redhill at 2 pm on Friday 30th January. Family flowers only, please, but donations may be made to the St Matthew's Organ Fund, c/o Stoneman's, Doran Court, Reigate Road, Redhill RH1 6AZ.

OYSE - Roger Gilbert of Paradise Road, Oxford, died peacefully on Thursday 22nd January. He was beloved husband of Norma, adored father of Ella, Julian and Mary-Jane and much loved grandfather of Hannah, Michael, Riana, Katie and Daniel. Family flowers only. Donations to The Botley Alzheimers House, Vale House, West Way, Oxford OX2 9UD. Memorial Service to be announced.

TALBOT-CLAYTON - Jane, died suddenly at Gloucester on 20th January 1998. Beloved sister to Bills and very special and much loved aunt to Ben, Toby, Robin and Elizabeth. Funeral at St Peter's Church, Stretton, Cheltenham on Friday 30th January at 2 pm. A Memorial Service will be held in Cirencester in mid May details will be published. Inter Family flowers only, however donations may be given to The Intensive Jackson Fund c/o Cowley & Son Ltd, Triangle House, 63 Victoria Road, Cirencester, Glos. GL7 1ES. Tel: (01285) 653298.

TOWNSEND - Donald Campbell aged 90 years. On Thursday 22nd January 1998 quietly after a fall, and three days after the death of his beloved wife Phyllis. Dearly loved father of Joanna. Joint funeral at Lillingstone Lovell Church, Buckinghamshire, 2.15 pm 29th January. Flowers or donations for Buckingham Hospital may be forwarded to J.E. Cowley & Son Ltd, Triangle House, 63 Victoria Road, Cirencester, Glos. GL7 1ES. Tel: (01285) 653298.

TOWNSEND - Phyllis aged 92 years. On 19th January 1998 peacefully after a short illness. Dearly beloved wife of Donald Campbell Townsend of Lillingstone Lovell, Bucks, and a much loved mother of Joanna. Funeral 2.15 pm 29th January at Lillingstone Lovell Church. Flowers or donations for Buckingham Hospital may be forwarded to J.E. Cowley & Son Funeral Directors, 71 High Street, Stony Stratford, MK11 1BA, tel: (01908) 562352.

WITHERS - Bill (of Electronic Developments), greatly loved by family and friends, collapsed and died at home on 19th January. Funeral Service at 10 am, 28th January, St Edward's Church, Hampton Hill, Middlesex. No flowers please.

WOODHALL - On Saturday January 17th 1998 James Charles George (RAF Retired) of Penstruan, Truro. Funeral Service on Saturday January 31st 12 noon at St Peter's Church, Mitchian, Cornwall, followed by private cremation. Family flowers only. Donations if desired for St Peter's Church, Mitchian. Funeral Directors: J.E.D. White-Courtney Johns, tel: (01209) [illegible] or (0800) 7316112.

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OBITUARIES

ANATOLI BOUKREEV

Anatoli Boukreev, Kazakh high-altitude mountaineer, has been lost on Annapurna aged 39 after an avalanche on Christmas Day. He was born on January 16, 1958.

Only last month, the American Alpine Club honoured Anatoli Boukreyev with its David A. Sowles Award, for his extraordinary, selfless and repeated rescue attempts on the South Col and upper slopes of Everest during the protracted storm of May 1996. Five guides and clients died then on the Nepalese side of the mountain, but Boukreev was responsbile for saving the lives of three of his exhausted team-mates stranded overnight in a blizzard at 8,000m.

The following day, at great personal risk, he went out again in a last effort to reach his friend and expedition leader, Scott Fischer, higher up on the mountain. But he found Fischer already dead. For these feats, Boukreev also received a *Letter of Commendation* from the United States Congress.

Boukreev was one of the toughest and greatest high-altitude mountaineers of his generation. He appeared to get stronger the higher he went, and he was once described as a lung with legs. In six years of climbing in the Himalayas and the Karakoram mountains, he had successfully been to the top of the highest peaks 21 times. Last year alone he climbed four 8,000m peaks in 80 days. Almost always he climbed without the use of supplementary oxygen, which he opposed on ethical and practical grounds. He would allow that the use of oxygen to reverse the deterioration of altitude sickness and cognitive function was crucial, but employing it as a matter of course tended only to mask serious symptoms of illness and to give a deceptive sense of security.

Boukreev began mountaineering at the age of 12 in the Ural Mountains and in a giant open-cast coalpit near Korkino. An exceptional sportsman, he was immensely strong and always prepared to train rigorously. Within four years he had gained his first high-altitude experience in the peaks of the rugged Tien Shan range, which straddles the borders of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and China. Overseas travel was difficult, but the mountains of the former Soviet Union provided plenty of scope and opportunity for his talent.

He completed more than thirty 7,000m ascents, and more than 200 others in the Tien Shan, Pamir, and Caucasus ranges, with the national climbing teams of the Soviet Union and Kazakhstan, and he was continually breaking speed records. In August 1987 he went up and down the 7,137m Lenin Peak in a remarkable 14 hours. Between 1982 and 1997 he was coach and mountaineering instructor to the Military Sports Club in Almaty, Kazakhstan (where he had made his home to be near the mountains), and for 11 of those years he also coached the Kazakh youth cross-country skiing teams.

Boukreev, left, with fellow Kazakh mountaineers in the Tien Shan range in Central Asia, 1995

The opportunity came at last to see the Himalayas when in 1989 he was selected to take part in an expedition which made the first traverse of all four 8,000m summits of Kangchenjunga. The break-up of the Soviet Union affected professional mountaineering disastrously. Without state support, top guides increasingly sought to sell their high-altitude expertise to the West, and although it was a hand-to-mouth existence, Boukreev was in great demand for his legendary strength and courage.

He guided on Mount McKinley in Alaska and the Himalayan peaks of Makalu and Cho Oyu. In 1995 he went to Everest (from the Tibetan side) for the British tour operator Henry Todd, and spent more than two hours on the summit, ensuring that all his clients got up and turned back safely. On Manaslu, when he and the two companions he was roped to had stopped to sip hot tea, one climber slipped and dragged the others off with him. Boukreev saved them all by ramming in his ice axe.

His services were secured the following year by the ambitious American leader Scott Fischer for a commercial attempt on Everest from Nepal. Fischer's was one of 11 expeditions based at the foot of the Khumbu icefall that season. Many were equipped with satellite 'phones and fax machines as well as computers linked to the Internet, with the result that as a fateful storm blew up, the world outside kept abreast of the developing tragedy as never before. Intense public interest was maintained for months afterwards in the media, and by the publication of several books.

One, the bestselling *Into Thin Air*, by Jon Krakauer, painted an unflattering picture of Boukreev and his role in events.

To Krakauer, a client on a rival commercial expedition, the Russian's descent to the South Col ahead of his clients, along with his steadfast refusal to use supplementary oxygen, smacked of irresponsibility. Boukreev was wounded and baffled at this suggestion, particularly since he had made his solo forays into the blizzard when no other guide, client, or Sherpa could muster the strength or courage to leave camp. Boukreev felt bound to publish his own account of what happened. *The Climb: Tragic Ambitions on Everest* (1997) was written in collaboration with the investigative film-maker Weston DeWalt. This and Boukreev's few articles, show that he was a thoughtful and articulate man, deeply concerned by modern changes in his beloved mountaineering.

"The world has an appetite for what we do," he remarked recently at a symposium on Alpine voyeurism in Banff, Alberta. "The question now is, will it eat us?"

At a memorial service at Base Camp shortly after the Everest tragedy, Anatoli Boukreev paid tribute to Scott Fischer and movingly apologised for not having reached him in time. He left the mountain then, to make a swift and solo ascent of nearby Lhotse, the fourth highest mountain in the world. His response to catastrophe and to hurtful criticism was to keep climbing.

Anatoli Boukreev never married, but he was supported through recent years by his partner, Linda Wylie.

MARGOT GORDON

Margot Gordon, squash and tennis champion, died on January 3 aged 85. She was born on July 1, 1912.

IN A brief sporting career, prematurely ended by the Second World War, Margot Gordon achieved world-class status as both a squash and tennis player. Despite the differences in racket grip, and the clashing techniques demanded by each game, Margot Lumb, as she then was, remained unbeaten as British squash champion from 1934 to 1939, was winner of the American women's squash championships in 1936 and played in the British team for the now defunct Wightman Cup in both 1937 and 1938.

She established a formidable record by being the first woman to win the British squash championship six times in a row, and did not even lose a game until the semi-finals of the fourth championship. She was also one of the first woman members of the All England Lawn Tennis Club.

The American tennis player Helen Jacobs described her talent for tennis as that of a "genius". In a 1937 article for the *Daily Sketch* the US champion warned: "I have seen no one in my own country whose potentialities are greater than that of this new English player."

Jacobs's prophetic abilities proved to be even stronger than her sporting prowess, for only the following year Gordon stole the American title from her, upsetting her status as number one seed, in a decisive 7-5, 6-2 victory at Forest Hills.

But it was at squash that Gordon made her greatest mark. Her domination of the sport in the prewar years was absolute. She frequently dispatched opponents in a matter of minutes and repeatedly broke her own records doing so. She won the 1937 title at Queen's Club, London, by beating Mrs Ian McKechnie in only 16 minutes.

In 1936 she became the second woman to win both the American and British squash championships in the same year (following Susan Noel who did so in 1933) and simultaneously the first ever player to have gone through the entire American tournament winning in straight sets.

A left-hander, she developed a dynamically aggressive playing style and employed a wide variety of shots in her approach to both squash and tennis. Slight of build and nimble on her feet, she always set a fast pace, by sheer speed often establishing her supremacy over her opponents. Watching her 1938 tennis victory over Helen Jacobs, even American commentators were unanimous in their praise for her powerful hitting and lithe energy.

One of five children, Margot Evelyn Lumb was the daughter of a businessman and inventor, Charles Fletcher Lumb, and his Cuban wife, Margarita. A fire in 1925 at their home on Kingston Hill meant that much of the house had to be rebuilt. During the course of renovation a ⅔-size squash court was added to the house's amenities.

There, and on the tennis and badminton courts that were laid out in the garden, their father indefatigably coached his sons and daughters. The only sport that was banned for Margot (and her sister) was wrestling, since her father thought it much too rough. He even forbade Margot from watching her brothers train — though, unknown to him, she would secretly watch from the squash court gallery.

Her siblings also had sporting talent. Her youngest brother, Raymond, won the 1933 and 1934 public schools squash rackets championships and her sister, Berenice, was once chosen for the Wightman Cup team and partnered Margot in the women's doubles in three prewar Wimbledon tournaments.

In 1944 Margot met and married W. H. L. (Bill) Gordon. His executive position with the Uganda Company, setting up and developing the country's natural resources, first took them to Uganda in 1949. They later moved to Nigeria, where Bill Gordon worked for the John Holt Trading Company. They eventually spent a total of 20 years together in Africa.

Margot played an active role in Ugandan and Nigerian political life. She was one of five women members of the Ugandan Legislative Council and served on several government committees dealing with women's education and social welfare.

She spent her retirement with her husband in England and France and, despite her advancing years, remained very active. She was frequently asked by the Wimbledon organisers to take part in "play-ins" on Centre Court before the start of the tournament. She played squash into her seventies and tennis well into her 85th year and was particularly proud to have beaten her 11-year-old grandson in a game last summer.

Bill Gordon died last month. Margot Gordon is survived by their son and three daughters.

BUXTON ORR

Buxton Orr, composer, died on December 27 aged 73. He was born on April 18, 1924.

COUNTLESS people have heard Buxton Orr's music without realising it. His early public was probably his largest — the audiences who encountered his compelling scores for *Suddenly Last Summer* and several Boris Karloff horror films, as well as the music for the original production of *Flowering Cherry*.

The band of enthusiasts familiar with the compositions and musicianship of his more mature years is considerably smaller but highly discriminating. His prolific output included songs, chamber music, works for brass and wind band, orchestral music, and a substantial number of operatic and music theatre pieces. He evolved an individual serial technique akin to a 12-note series, which, rather than being "atonal", embraced melody and harmony. Performers responded to his new pieces with excitement. Among the contemporary musicians who held him in high esteem are Robert Cohen, Barry Guy, Stephen Isserlis, Tamsin Little, Raphael Wallfisch, Jeremy Williams and John York.

Orr was innovative and encouraging in his teaching methods — and a masterly conductor. Students and players found him extraordinarily helpful.

Buxton Daeblitz Orr had a far from conventional childhood. In his Glasgow infancy he chose to live with his grandparents and a galaxy of doting aunts rather than with his parents in their own flat. His father, John Orr, worked for *The Glasgow Herald*: his mother, Marie Daeblitz, acted with the Glasgow Citizens Theatre, and he also had two cousins who were actresses.

In 1933 Orr moved with his parents to London. He proved a bright pupil, excelling in sciences. Wartime evacuation took him to school in Denbigh and instilled in him a lifelong love of Wales. Back in London he studied medicine (which was considered more respectable than music) at the Middlesex, and was singled out to take the new BSc degree in physiology, in which he got a first.

During National Service as a medical officer in the RAF, however, he spent his spare time studying musical composition. He submitted some pieces to Benjamin Frankel, who accepted him into his composition group at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he also studied conducting under Aylmer Buesst. With his film scores beginning to bring in an income, Orr switched from medicine to music for a living.

In 1965 he joined the staff of the Guildhall School and in 1975 he founded the Guildhall New Music Ensemble, which gave some stirring performances under his baton. Between 1970 and 1980 he was conductor of the London Jazz Composers' Orchestra, which was founded by Barry Guy, touring England and taking part in the 1972 Berlin Jazz Festival. He directed the wilful band of individualists "like a traffic cop".

He was asked by the Guildhall Principal, Allen Percival, to pioneer an innovatory class in "general musicianship", with a small group of students working together to concentrate on the repertoire rather than on the more usual academic approach. Admiring his friend Hans Keller's functional analysis, he taught his classes through performance, so making sure that his students learnt by playing as a group. Later he collaborated with Hans Keller to teach a string quartet master class.

He received an increasing number of commissions and invitations, and in 1988 he won the Seagrams Prize of the American National Music Theatre Network for *Ring in the New*, composed in collaboration with Michael Bawtree during a period as composer-in-residence at the Banff Centre for Fine Arts in Alberta. His later music was almost always written for specific performers or to commission.

Diminutive and increasingly dapper, Orr was usually accompanied by one of the bevy of ladies he successively loved and befriended, or by his ex-wife Jean with whom he retired to Herefordshire when in 1990 he gave up regular teaching to devote more time to composition.

He recovered well from a minor stroke in 1994, composing with renewed vigour using state-of-the-art computer technology: he had just completed a string trio, and was actively pursuing his studies in German and philosophy. But he never regained consciousness after a second severe stroke in London on November 24.

He was twice married and twice divorced. There were no children of either marriage.

MILESTONES

George Pottinger, civil servant, died on January 15 aged 81. He was born on June 11, 1916.

The name of George Pottinger will forever be associated with the Poulson corruption scandal of the early 1970s, which led to the resignation of the former Home Secretary, Reginald Maudling. Pottinger was a civil servant, tipped as a future Permanent Secretary at the Scottish Office, and was convicted on charges of conspiracy to corrupt. He admitted receiving gifts worth £30,000 from the architect John Poulson, who used a network of MPs, council officials and friends in high places to help secure lucrative contracts. But Pottinger maintained that he had not acted corruptly, and had declared the gifts to his superiors at the Scottish Office. A witty and engaging character, he retained a wide circle of loyal friends despite four years in prison.

Obituary published on January 19.

Peter Diamand, artistic administrator, died on January 16 aged 84. He was born on June 8, 1913.

For 13 years in the 1960s and 1970s Peter Diamand ran the Edinburgh International Festival, and made sure that it lived up to the middle word of its title. He was born in Austria, his upbringing was cosmopolitan and he spoke half-a-dozen European languages fluently. He spent a period in a concentration camp for Jews, but after the war worked for the pianist Artur Schnabel. After two years at the Netherlands Opera he spent 17 years at the Holland Festival. When he moved to Edinburgh he was sometimes criticised for too great an emphasis on classical music, but he succeeded in his wish to make "artists and audiences feel happy".

Obituary published on January 20.

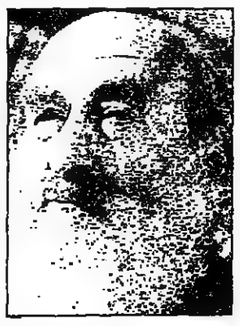
Sir Anthony Glyn, 2nd Baronet and author, died on January 20 aged 75. He was born on March 13, 1922.

In the mid-1950s, Sir Geoffrey Davson told his astonished wife that he was going to change the family name by deed poll, send his suits to the ragman and fill the house with abstract paintings. The pinstriped baronet business executive was transformed into a be-sweatered and bohemian writer, Sir Anthony Glyn. A grandson of Elinor Glyn, he wrote a biography of her turbulent life, and a number of novels, the most successful of which was *The Dragon Variation* (1969), which was widely regarded as the most successful of novels about the game of chess. Among his other works was his knowledgeable and popular *A Companion Guide to Paris*, published in 1986.

Obituary published on January 22.

Chaim Bermant, author and journalist, died on January 20 aged 68. He was born on February 26, 1929.

Born in Poland, Chaim Bermant moved to Glasgow with his family when he was six, but his two elder sisters made sure that his Jewish education was continued despite evacuation during the war. He began writing comic novels but his true vocation was as a journalist, notably with *The Jewish Chronicle*. A liberal, he outraged the Orthodox with his criticism of Jewish foibles. His support for the State of Israel did not stop his berating its people and politicians, but an attempt to live there was shortlived.



Obituary published on January 23.

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AXTELL, PETER GRAHAM of The Old Rectory, Longworth, Abingdon, Oxfordshire died on 11 October 1993 particulars to WITHERS Solicitors of 12 GOUGH SQUARE, LONDON EC4A 3DE (Ref: A J THOMPSON) before 25 March 1998

BERCOW, Lady TERESA MARY VIOLET of 9 St Michael's Green, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, died on 23 November 1996 particulars to WITHERS Solicitors of 12 GOUGH SQUARE, LONDON EC4A 3DE (Attn: Jeremy Patrick Arnold) before 25 March 1998

CAMERON-ROSE, HUGH ALASTAIR of Hooper's Farm, Kings Somborne, Hampshire died on 30 December 1994 particulars to WITHERS Solicitors of 12 GOUGH SQUARE, LONDON EC4A 3DE (Ref: B T J Stevens) before 25 March 1998

CHAMBERLAINE, DAFNINE HELENA of The Old Rectory, Sarsden Road, Churchill, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire died on 17 August 1996 particulars to WITHERS Solicitors of 12 GOUGH SQUARE, LONDON EC4A 3DE (Ref: Murphy Hallows) before 25 March 1998

ELLIS GWYN MERION of 20 Heyburn Road, London N15 5NL, died on 29th July 1997. Particulars to Carter Lemon Solicitors of 11 Bonnet Buildings, London EC4A 1NH before 25th March 1998.

FEATHERSTONE, PEGGY 10 Whitehall Close, Thames Road, London SE28 8HX died 21 April 1997; particulars to D E Sturgess, Solicitors, 125 High Lane, Southampton SO15 5AF before 31 March 1998

GREENWELL, BASIL EVELYN of Tillmans, River, Pulborough, West Sussex, GU28 9AY died on 11 April 1990 particulars to WITHERS Solicitors of 12 GOUGH SQUARE, LONDON EC4A 3DE (Ref: RJP/MAS) before 25 March 1998

KEYES, JAMES DAVID AGAR of West Burnham Hall, Tidenham, Mitcheldean, died on 6 October 1997 particulars to WITHERS Solicitors of 12 GOUGH SQUARE, LONDON EC4A 3DE (Ref: RJP/MAS) before 25 March 1998

SINGER, ARNOLD JOACHIM of 12 Alverstone Road, Wilbraham Green, London NW2 died on 19 December 1997 particulars to TRINGHAMS Solicitors of 236 DORSET STREET, LONDON W1H 3FG before 25 March 1998

TERON WOODWUCK, PHILIP of Casa Nova, 50020 Rassuno Di Chianti, Provincia Di Firenze, Italy died on 5 April 1996 particulars to WITHERS Solicitors of 12 GOUGH SQUARE, LONDON EC4A 3DE (Attn: Murray Hallows) before 25 March 1998

WATERHOUSE, The Rev CAROLINE of Middleton Hall, Youlgreave, Bakewell, Derbyshire died on 5 January 1992 particulars to WITHERS Solicitors of 12 GOUGH SQUARE, LONDON EC4A 3DE (Ref: RJP/MAS) before 25 March 1998

LEGAL NOTICES

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DOCKET NO: CV-97-0073901-S
GMAC MORTGAGE CORPORATION
VS.
JORGENSEN, PAUL
JORGENSEN, MARSHA, ET AL.
SUPERIOR COURT
JD OF LITCHFIELD
AT LITCHFIELD
DECEMBER 29, 1997

NOTICE TO:
PAUL JORGENSEN AND MARSHA JORGENSEN, IF LIVING OR IF DECEASED, THEIR WIDOWER AND HEIRS.

The Plaintiff has caused that judgments and decrees be entered, if living, and their widow and heirs, if not living, as party Defendant in the complaint which it has brought to the Superior Court seeking a foreclosure of its mortgage, immediate possession of the mortgaged premises, a deficiency judgment, the appointment of a receiver to collect rents and profits accruing for the premises, reasonable attorney's fees and costs, and such other relief and further equitable relief as may be required, with respect to the premises known as 9 Mountain Ridge, Unit 9, Torrington, Connecticut. This complaint was returnable to that Court on June 3, 1997 and will be pending thereafter that date.

The subscribing authority finds that the residence of the aforesaid Paul Jorgensen and Marsha Jorgensen, if living, and the identity and whereabouts of their widow and heirs, if not living, is unknown to the Plaintiff, who represents that all reasonable efforts have been made to ascertain the same and failed.

Now, therefore, it is hereby ordered that notice of the institution of this action be given to each Defendant by some proper officer stating a true and attested copy of this order be published in LONDON Times once a week for two weeks, commencing on or before January 31 1998, and that return of services be made to the Court.

BRIAN J. MURPHY
Chief Clerk,
Superior Court
Judicial District of Litchfield

Dull end to week

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

BANKS

BREWERIES, PUBS & REST

DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS

BUILDING MATERIALS

ELECTRICITY

ELECTRONIC & ELECT

CHEMICALS

DISTRIBUTORS

ENGINEERING, VEHICLES

FOOD MANUFACTURERS

INVESTMENT TRUSTS

HEALTHCARE

HOUSEHOLD GDS & TEXT

ENGINEERING

CONSTRUCTION

INSURANCE

LEISURE & HOTELS

OIL & GAS

BRITISH FUNDS

SHORTS (under 5 years)

LONGS (over 15 years)

UNDATED

MEDIUMS (5 to 15 years)

INDEX-LINKED on projected inflation of:

OTHER FINANCIAL

MEDIA

PHARMACEUTICALS

PRINTING & PAPER

PROPERTY

MINING

RETAILERS, FOOD

RETAILERS, GENERAL

SUPPORT SERVICES

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

TRANSPORT

WATER

ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET

Don't miss the 31st January deadline or you could be down £100 overnight

You must send your completed tax return back to us by this date, or you face a £100 penalty. Remember, 31st January means 31st January. If you need help, contact your tax office during office hours, or call the Self Assessment Helpline on 0645 000 444.*

*Calls are charged at local rate. Some mobile networks may vary.

Inland Revenue

Self Assessment - a fairer, self system.

Source: FT Information

Price at suspension; † Ex dividend; ‡ Ex scrip; ♣ Ex rights issue; ♥ Ex all; § Ex capital distribution; * Figures or signal unsigned. No significant data. Companies in bold are constituents of the FTSE 100 Index.

هكذا من الأصل

PROFILE 30
Oppenheimer seeks to keep dream alive

BUSINESS

WEEKEND MONEY
SECTION 2

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

SATURDAY JANUARY 24 1998

City split over need for rate rise after growth slows

By Alasdair Murray
Economics Correspondent

ECONOMIC growth declined sharply in the last quarter of 1997, leaving the Bank of England facing its toughest decision on interest rates since it was granted independence last May.

Fourth-quarter GDP rose 0.5 per cent over the previous quarter, taking the annual rate of growth to 3.1 per cent, compared with 3.7 per cent in the third quarter. Over 1997 as a whole, GDP showed an increase of 3.3 per cent, compared with 2.6 per cent in 1996.

The City was divided on whether the speed of the fall in growth would be sufficient to persuade the Bank not to raise rates when it meets early next month. Eddie George, Governor of the Bank, has made it clear that he wishes to see a period of below-trend growth to take the heat out of the economy. The Bank has also repeatedly cautioned that it believes the current rate of earnings and labour market growth are incompatible with meeting the inflation target.

The Office for National Statistics blamed the decline on weak industrial output figures. But the service sector again registered strong growth of 1 per cent in the quarter, compared with 0.9 per cent in the previous quarter.

Nick Vaughan, UK economist at Barclays Capital, said with wages rising and service sector still growing strongly, "a quarter point rise in February remains the most likely outcome."

But Michael Saunders, UK economist at Salomon Smith Barney, said: "The authorities probably will keep rates on hold while they see if the slowdown is intense enough to prevent a further deterioation in capacity strains."

The pound eased against the mark, closing down nearly half a pfennig at DM2.9662. But sterling climbed a further two cents against the dollar to $1.6662 because of the political problems in the US.

The stock market struggled under pressure from renewed problems in Indonesia and a fall on Wall Street. The FTSE 100 closed down 71.7 at 5,181.4.

In Indonesia, the rupiah endured another day of heavy falls as traders reacted negatively to the Government's revised budget plans and the growing debt problem. The rupiah hit a low of 15,000 to the dollar before central bank intervention helped it to stabilise at 13,250. But in after-hours trading it started to fall again, to be quoted at 15,500, nearly 85 per cent below its July levels.

Analysts said that the speed of the rupiah's decline had effectively made every major company in Indonesia insolvent. Indonesia's foreign corporate debt is estimated to total about $66 billion. Other Asian currencies were again hit by the rupiah's problems, with the Singapore dollar, Malaysian ringgit and Philippine peso also suffering further falls.

But there was more optimistic news elsewhere in the region after South Korea concluded the first deal in its battle to reschedule crippling short-term debt repayments. A group of German Banks yesterday accepted a plan to extend the repayment schedule on $25 billion of short-term debt by up to five years.

Commentary, page 29

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100	5181.4	(-71.7)
Yield	3.13%	
FTSE All share	2432.02	(-26.23)
Nikkei	16789.11	(+383.42)
New York:		
Dow Jones	7666.11	(-64.77)*
S&P Composite	954.65	(-8.39)*

US RATE

Federal Funds	5¾%*	(5⅞%)
Long Bond	103[illegible]*	(103[illegible])
Yield	5.91%*	(5.86%)

LONDON MONEY

3-mth Interbank	7[illegible]%	(7[illegible]%)
Liffe long gilt future (Mar)	123[illegible]	(123[illegible])

STERLING

New York:		
$	1.6687*	(1.6487)
London:		
$	1.6658	(1.6483)
DM	2.9681	(2.9710)
FFr	9.9367	(9.9514)
SFr	2.4100	(2.4171)
Yen	209.99	(209.94)
£ Index	104.9	(104.8)

DOLLAR

London:		
DM	1.7808*	(1.8040)
FFr	5.9655*	(6.0420)
SFr	1.4440*	(1.4588)
Yen	125.97*	(127.13)
$ Index	108.0	(108.9)

Tokyo close Yen 125.95

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Apr) $15.25 ($15.15)

GOLD

London close $296.75 (294.15)

* denotes midday trading price

EMI issues profit warning as Japanese sales plummet

By Raymond Snoddy, Media Editor

SIR Colin Southgate, the executive hired to sort out the troubled Royal Opera House, yesterday revealed that EMI Group, the music and retail group of which he is chairman, has plenty of problems of its own.

EMI shares fell sharply after Sir Colin issued a profit warning because consumer confidence in Japan and other Asian markets had "dropped like a stone" and hit sales over the Christmas period. As a result EMI's operating profits for the full year would be £25 million below the £335 million expected by the stock market.

The warning came only three months after Sir Colin had described the worldwide music market as "flat", and EMI's shares yesterday fell 48¾p to 430p, a decline of 10 per cent, to the lowest level since the company was demerged from Thorn in 1996.

Sir Colin said: "I think you have to recognise that Japan is the second-largest music market in the world and nobody could have predicted, apart from George Soros, what was going to happen in Asia."

Japan and the Far East accounts for about 15 per cent of EMI's sales. Some markets have fallen by up to 20 per cent, but the worst impact has been felt in Japan.

Sir Colin conceded that there was unlikely to be a rapid recovery in consumer confidence in the region which was one of the reasons why analysts marked EMI down so sharply yesterday.

Labels are being merged to reduce costs in Japan, but analysts believe that TOEMI, the EMI joint venture with Toshiba, may intervene to restrict the extent of the restructuring.

Jason Crisp, media analyst at Société Générale, the broker, said: "EMI is thought to want to cut staff at TOEMI by about 300 people, but is prevented by the difficulties of making people redundant in Japan."

Analysts suggest that present circumstances may even encourage Toshiba to sell its stake in what is now a loss-making venture. In 1994 EMI acquired 5 per cent of TOEMI for £24.1 million, valuing the business at about £500 million.

Worldwide, EMI is faring better and Sir Colin said he envisaged that full-year sales would be up about 5 per cent at current exchange rates.

EMI has the top Christmas album in the US in Garth Brooks and the top UK album with The Verve. And despite adverse publicity in Britain the Spice Girls have been selling well in world markets.

Sir Colin said yesterday that EMI was not obliged to give a trading update. He said: "We just thought people ought to know what was happening there [in Japan and the Asia Pacific region]."

He remains optimistic about finalising the "wonderful" deal that would bring together HMV music stores, Dillons and Waterstones in a new retail group in which EMI would have a minority stake.

The Thorn half of Thorn EMI has fared even worse than the music division since the demerger. Thorn's share price stood at 410p at the time of the demerger. It fell 1½p at 149p yesterday and has been as low as 135p. Executives at the rental group spoke in November of "an extraordinary" series of adverse events in its first year of independence.

Sir Colin Southgate said consumer confidence in the Far East had "dropped like a stone" and hit sales over Christmas

Sponsor sought by Spice Girls

By Chris Ayres

THE Spice Girls have hired the marketing expert behind last month's Concert of Hope for the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund to find a corporate sponsor for their first world tour, which starts next month.

Paul Morrison, a director of the French agency KLP has been drafted in to strike a a multi-million pound deal for the group. His appointment follows the Spice Girls' failure to find a replacement for Simon Fuller, their previous manager who was sacked two months ago. Mr Fuller struck deals for the group with Pepsi Cola, Walkers Crisps, Polaroid Cameras and Impulse Perfume.

Last night Mr Morrison said he would follow a lower profile strategy. "We want to bring in a brand which is not too in-your-face."

The Spice Girls have been interviewing possible female replacements for Mr Fuller, without success. The music industry is notorious for being dominated by men and very few female managers have experience looking after such a high profile band.

Only Nancy Philips, has been allowed into the band's close circle of advisers since Mr Fuller's departure. Ms Philips, who used to manage The Undertones, runs their London HQ.

Fidelity to shed 200 and close UK broker

By Richard Miles

FIDELITY Brokerage Services, one of the country's biggest execution-only stockbrokers, is to close with the loss of more than 200 jobs.

Its parent, Fidelity Investments, the leading US fund manager, said it had explored the possiblity of selling the company, but had been unable to find a suitable buyer.

A spokesman said FBS would make arrangements for its 15,000 active clients to transfer free of charge to an alternative stockbroker of their choice before the company closed on February 28.

The spokesman said Fidelity's withdrawal from the UK stockbroking market would allow the group to concentrate its resources on the core fund management business in Europe and elsewhere.

He said the decision to pull out of the UK was unconnected with the £200,000 fine levied on FBS last May by the Securities and Futures Authority, its regulator, after technology problems.

But industry sources suggested that Fidelity was unprepared to meet the costs of improving its technology at a time when the introduction of order-driven trading and rolling settlement had sent development costs spiralling.

Based in Reigate, Surrey, FBS employs 260 people. The company said that it hoped to redeploy as many staff as possible. The closure comes in the face of growing competition in the execution-only market. FBS claimed a 15 per cent share. Charles Schwab, the market leader formerly known as Sharelink, has been investing heavily in technology.

Northern Foods plans demerger

Shares in Northern Foods rose close to a four-year high after the company confirmed market speculation that it is planning a demerger of its dairy business to focus on the prepared food division.

Page 29
Tempus, page 28

In The Hot Seat

Tiny Rowland says that Nick Morrell is "an agreeable bloke". But does the chief executive of Lonrho possess the ability to complete the company's transformation from diversified trading house to a focused mining business?

Page 30

Unit trust prices

The Times Unit Trust Information Service, with the most detailed list of unit trust prices data, appears on

Page 31.

Advent favourite to buy United's regional titles

By Jason Nissé

ADVENT International, the Boston-based venture capital group that is backing Tim Waterstone's tilt at W H Smith, has emerged as the surprise favourite to buy the regional newspaper operations of United News & Media.

Lord Hollick's TV and newspaper group had hoped to receive at least £400 million for the business, whose main operations are in Yorkshire, London and the South Eastand Spain. However, it now seems likely that the ultimate figure will fall short of that total.

Final bids have to be in for United Provincial Newspapers (UPN) on Thursday with only four bidders expected to make an offer and only two expected to be willing to buy the whole operation.

Two trade buyers — Trinity International and Newsquest — are interested in part of the business.

Trinity wants the Yorkshire papers, which include the prestigious *Yorkshire Post*, while Newsquest is keen to buy the papers in London and the South East.

However, media experts believe that any deal with Newsquest might be blocked by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission because Newsquest has strong titles in the same area.

A management team is also expected to bid, backed by Candover,the venture capital group.

Rumours that Stephen Grabiner, United director in charge of newspapers, would join this bid have been denied.

However, media insiders believe that the strongest offer will come from Advent, leading a team which includes Tony Caplin, the former chairman of Hunterprint.

Advent executives travelled to Yorkshire during the week to meet with managers from UPN.

Advent recently raised a $1 billion (£600 million) fund specifically to invest in Europe and has set up an office in London.

Last year it invested $675 million in European deals and among the transactions it has backed have been the buyout of Eversholt, the British Rail rolling stock company, and Vision Express, the opticians chain.

Microsoft bid for BT evaporates

MARKET fantasies that Microsoft founder Bill Gates might bid for BT evaporated yesterday as the share price dropped by 14p to 569p. The rumours pushed the BT share price to an all-time high of 583p on Thursday (Raymond Snoddy, writes).

Trading volumes in BT were high — more than 30 million on Thursday and 22.1 million yesterday — suggesting the collapse of BT's deal with MCI had left a vacuum filled by rumour.

Much of the buying came from the US where analysts have drawn attention to the fact that BT shares are still relatively cheap.

Mr Gates made it clear earlier this week that although Microsoft would work with telecoms companies it would not go into the telecommunications business.

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A WEEK IN THE CITY

What would the week be without a mega-merger? SmithKline Beecham obliged with talk of a £75 billion merger with American Home Products, potentially creating the world's biggest drugs company. The deal, if it proceeds, will create a group with 110,000 employees and annual sales of £17 billion. All this leaves the current top contender — the £22.7 billion merger of MCI and WorldCom — somewhat in the shade.

Familiar names made the headlines. Bill Harrison, the abrasive former chief executive of BZW, surfaced at Deutsche Bank, where he is to take charge of global corporate advisory business. Colette Bowe, former chief executive of the Personal Investment Authority, is to join Robert Fleming as chairman of UK and European retail asset management.

Tremors in Asia began to subside, amid calming sentiment from the International Monetary Fund. The IMF dispelled suggestions that the Asian crisis would unleash a global wave of deflation, although economists remain divided over the extent of the impact on the UK.

Police in Bangkok clashed with thousands of car-parts workers protesting over bonus cuts, amid fears that financial instability could spark civil unrest across South-East Asia. UK tour operators have been hit by a rash of cancellations, despite the lure of knockdown prices. Cathay Pacific said it was cutting 760 jobs because of the sharp downturn in traffic on routes to Hong Kong.

New aircraft cancellations by Asian carriers could affect Boeing, currently absorbing McDonnell Douglas to form the world's biggest defence and aerospace group. Costs associated with the McDonnell Douglas merger will leave it in the red for 1997 — its first loss in 40 years.

Guinness Mahon, the 162-year-old merchant bank, was put up for sale by Bank of Yokohama, continuing the reshaping of the City landscape. The bank, which includes Henderson Crosthwaite, the stockbroker, is expected to fetch up to £120 million.

Allied Colloids, the Bradford-based chemicals group, fell to a £1.42 billion bid from Ciba Specialty Chemicals, the Swiss-owned group, despite rival overtures from US-based Hercules. Sir Ernest Harrison, 71, announced he was stepping down as chairman of Vodafone Group in favour of Lord MacLaurin of Knebworth, the Tesco pioneer. He remains chairman and chief executive of Racal Electronics.

High Street sales fell sharply in December, fuelling hopes that the economy is starting to slow. The surprise dip makes an interest rate rise next month less likely, although Eddie George, the Bank of England Governor, hinted that further rises might still be necessary to keep inflation in check.

John Menzies said it was withdrawing from the high street after 165 years, leaving 232 Menzies newsagents on the block. The Financial Services Authority is to act as external regulator to the Lloyd's insurance market. St Pancras Chambers, the Gothic-style building fronting the North London railway station, is to be turned into a 300-bed Marriott Hotel. The top three floors will become loft-style flats.

Jon Ashworth

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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Stock Market Writer of the Year

Oil surplus puts skids under sector's shares

OIL companies came under the hammer as the supply of crude oil to world markets continued to outstrip demand.

The price of Brent crude for March delivery dipped another ten cents to $14.90 (£8.80) a barrel, its lowest level for almost four years, before rallying to close unchanged at $15. But that compares with a price of $25 a year ago. Traders say there is little prospect of recovery in the short-term.

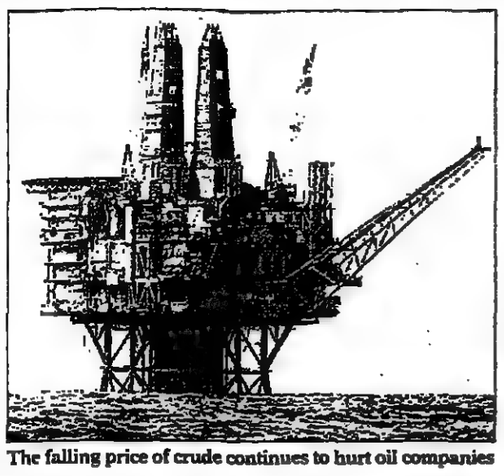
Chris Buckley at Merrill Lynch, the broker, says the fall began in November when Opec raised production quotas. It further deteriorated when Iraq was given permision by the United Nations to again resume production as part of the oil-for-food agreement. The mild winter weather in the US and the economic turmoil in Asia have added to the woes of the oil companies which suffererd a sell-off overnight in New York.

Shell was the heaviest traded stock among the top 100 companies, falling 16p to 387¼p as a massive 86.4 million shares changed hands. But Mr Buckley says Shell is unlikely to be as badly affected as oil companies that are more reliant on the oil price. These included **BP**, down 33p at 746p, **British Borneo**, 10½p at 342½p, **Enterprise Oil**, 15p at 514p, **Cairn Energy**, 8p at 445½p, **Hardy Oil & Gas**, 11p at 246½p, **Ranger Oil**, 7½p at 367½p, and **Monument Oil & Gas**, 5¼p at 74½p.

Share prices generally ended the week on a flat note. Wall Street's reversal of early gains prompted a late sell-off in London that saw prices close just above their worst levels of the day. The FTSE 100 index saw its deficit double during the last hour of trading to close 71.7 down at 5,181.4. That extended the loss on the week to 81.7.

Total turnover was high, with 918 million shares traded but the absence of any corporate news among blue chips after a week of speculation proved a disappointment.

This week's speculative buying of **British Telecom** showed signs of boiling over as the price retreated 14p to 569p. Even so, there was still heavy turnover in the shares with almost 22.2 million traded, making it the second heaviest traded stock among the blue chips. Brokers have virtually discounted talk of a bid from Bill Gates's Microsoft, but are reluctant to rule out a strategic alliance with the computer software group. Much of the buying has come from the US, leading to suggestions that a rival telecom company may be eyeing up BT with the view to a merger.



The falling price of crude continues to hurt oil companies

Cable & Wireless, which broke off merger talks with BT last year, rose 18½p 552p with some speculators taking the view that both sides may again try to get together.

There was also speculative buying of the other telecom companies. **Colt Telecom** jumped 59p to 870p, while gains were also recorded in **Cable & Wireless Communications**, 15½p better at 289p, and **Orange**, 3½p to 296¼p. But **Vodafone** ran into profit taking, losing 24½p at 466p.

Northern Foods, up 8p at 288p, has quickly justified the faith shown earlier this week by Merrill Lynch, the broker, which has been recommending the shares to clients. Yesterday Northern confirmed plans to demerge its dairy products division.

Oasis Stores bounced back from Thursday's disappointing trading update with a rise of 25½p at 150p. **Laura Ashley** has also been attracting private investors who see the shares, up 5½p at 34p, as a recovery play.

The profits warning from the Planet Hollywood chain of restaurants continued to weigh heavily on **Rank Group**, which owns the rival Hard Rock Café. The price fell a further 17p to finish at its lowest level for more than four years at 307¼p. Brokers fear Rank may be poised to issue another profits warning.

The drugs sector again came under the spotlight with **SmithKline Beecham** adding 4p to 725p as City fund managers pinned their hopes on a quick resumption of merger talks with American Home Products.

But **Zeneca** was under pressure with the price dropping 70p to £23.90 after ABN Amro Hoare Govett, the broker, warned clients that the shares were 25 per cent overvalued.

Glaxo Wellcome was another faller, dropping 64p to £15.37, while **Shield Diagnostics** surged 105p to 777½p after the group signed a licensing agreement with Abbott Laboratories of the US.

The profits warning from **EMI Group** sent the share tumbling 48¾p to a new low of 430p. Brokers had been looking for pre-tax profits of £335 million.

Blue Circle retreated 14p to 311½p as Goldman Sachs moved its recommendation from a "trading buy" to "market outperform". **Compass Group**, the independent caterer, was a nervous market, falling 26p to 786p.

Aim-listed **International Greetings** rose 12½p to 437½p ahead of interim results on Monday, while another Aim-listed company, **Selector**, was suspended at 42½p pending clarification of its financial position.

It was the first day of dealings for **Sanctuary Group** after a placing at 20p. The media and entertainment group, which handles rock groups such as *Iron Maiden*, touched a high for the day of 26¼p before closing at 24½p, a premium of 4½p. The warrants closed at 7p.

☐ **GILT-EDGED:** Bond prices were unable to glean support from the lower than expected increase in the GDP numbers. City investors remain concerned that the Bank of England's independent Monetary Policy Committee will raise rates again next month.

In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt finished three ticks lower at £123 17/32, while in the cash market Treasury 7.25 per cent 2007 was a couple of ticks easier at £108¾.

☐ **NEW YORK:** Shares were flat in morning trading with investors eyeing earnings, problems in South-East Asia and developments in the Clinton sex scandal. By midday the Dow Jones industrial average was 64.77 down at 7,666.11.

Misys, the information and technology specialist, surged 130p to £21.42½ on some positive comments from NatWest Markets, the broker, before half-year results on Wednesday. NatWest is forecasting an increase in pre-tax profits from £23.7 million to £30 million, accompanied by a 15 per cent rise in the dividend.

MOVERS OF THE WEEK

	Current price	Week's change	
British Telecom	569p	+22p	Bid speculation
Allied Domecq	554p	+7p	Talk of Seagrams merger
Allied Colloids	201p	+32½p	Bid battle develops
Proteus Int	83½p	+23½p	BSE process adopted
Body Shop	123½p	-13p	Profits warning
Laporte	619p	-19p	Large stake sold
Booker	217½p	-37p	Brokers gloomy on prospects
GGT Group	132½p	-71p	Loses major client
Laura Ashley	34p	+14p	Recovery hopes

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):	
Dow Jones	7666.11 (+64.77)
S&P Composite	954.65 (-8.39)
Tokyo:	
Nikkei Average	16789.11 (+383.47)
Hong Kong:	
Hang Seng	8920.20 (+36.47)
Amsterdam:	
AEX Index	933.20 (-5.81)
Sydney:	
AO	[illegible]
Frankfurt:	
DAX	4257.31 (+17.06)
Singapore:	
Straits	1259.83 (-9.66)
Brussels:	
General	14870.34 (-85.36)
Paris:	
CAC-40	2860.15 (-22.44)
Zurich:	
SKA Gen	1290.90 (+10.90)
London:	
FT 30	3235.4 (-50.8)
FTSE 100	5181.4 (-71.7)
FTSE 250	4806.9 (-6.4)
FTSE 350	2489.4 (-28.6)
FTSE Eurotrack 100	2735.06 (+4.16)
FTSE All-Share	2432.02 (-26.23)
FTSE Non Financials	2431.80 (-36.72)
FTSE Fixed Interest	138.52 (+0.30)
FTSE Govt Secs	103.09 (-0.8)
Bargains	67003
SEAQ Volume	918.0m
US$	1.6662 (+0.0180)
German Mark	2.9662 (-0.0009)
Exchange Index	104.9 (+0.1)
Bank of England official close (4pm)	
£-ECU	1.5031
£-SDR	1.2172
RPI	160.0 Dec (3.6%) Jan 1987=100
RPIX	158.3 Dec (2.7%) Jan 1987=100

RECENT ISSUES

Abbey Natl Dublin	93½	...
General Inds	35½	...
Longmead (135)	142½	...
Marchpole	110	...
Razorback Vehicles	102½	...
Sanctuary Warrants	7	...
Second Scot Zr Dv	101½	...
Second Scottish	111	- 1

RIGHTS ISSUES

Calluna n/p (9)	1	...

MAJOR CHANGES

RISES:	
Xenova	205p (+25p)
Colt Telecom	870p (+59p)
Filtronic Com	459p (+30p)
St James Place	186½p (+11p)
Cable&Wire Comms	289p (+15½p)
Scotia	332½p (+16p)
Atkins Ws	426½p (+18p)
Gaskell	437½p (+15p)
Cable & Wireless	552p (+18½p)
Halifax	829p (+27p)
Utd Assurance	551p (+14½p)
WF Elect	733p (+18p)
Vanguard	480p (+11½p)
Robert Walters	511½p (+10p)
Tate & Lyle	583p (+10p)
Boots	816p (+14p)
Stagecoach	790p (+12½p)
Fuji Bank Y	351½p (+17p)
FALLS:	
EMI	430p (-48¾p)
Lavendon	324p (-22½p)
Rank Org	307½p (-17p)
Cox Insce	254p (-14p)
Vodafone	466p (-24½p)
Molins	270p (-12½p)
Blue Circle	311½p (-14p)
Hardy Oil	246½p (-11p)
Br Petroleum	746p (-33p)
Shell	387½p (-16p)
REA	266p (-10p)
Ladbroke	275p (-10p)
Capital Radio	520p (-17½p)
Compass Gp	786p (-26p)
Enterprise	514p (-15p)
Legal & Gen	595p (-15½p)
BT	569p (-14p)

Closing Prices Page 26

TEMPUS

Milk separation

CHRIS HASKINS, chairman of Northern Foods, has moaned that his company is a "tale of two businesses". While the food business that includes Goodfellas pizzas and Fox's biscuits has soared away, the group's share price has spent most of the past five years in the doldrums because of problems in the dairy division. The inexorable decline of doorstep deliveries, the ruthlessness of supermarket buyers and the difficulties of living with Milk Marque have regularly combined to produce an unappetising soufflé at results time.

Mr Haskins has finally run out of patience waiting for the dairy business to come good. Having failed to find a buyer for Express Dairies and Dale Farms, Northern has opted for a demerger as the most straightforward solution.

The dairy industry is a world of its own, and has almost no overlap with other food businesses. Raw milk prices are quoted in ecus, and have become cheaper thanks to the strong pound. This has helped Northern to enjoy something of a recovery in recent months.

Mr Haskins believes the dairy industry is facing a painful and unpredictable shakeout. As one of the biggest producers, Northern's dairy arm should benefit as the weaker firms fall by the wayside. Rumours of the demerger have already added £46 million to Northern's valuation. With Milk Marque unable to raise milk prices, the demerger will probably add £100 million to the group, the equivalent of 17p a share.

The shares added 8p yesterday, and now trade on 15 times forecast earnings. After the strong rise, that looks fair value.

Hazlewood

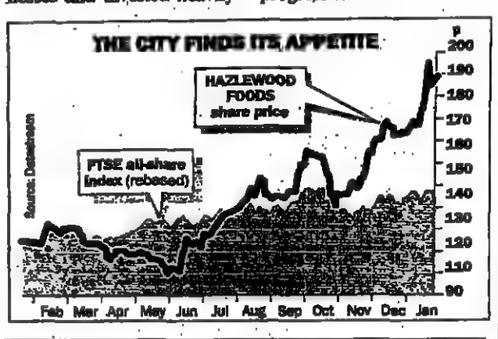
SANDWICHES are not to be scoffed at. Hazlewood Foods is paying £14 million for a London sandwich maker that earned just £200,000 on sales of £9.3 million last year, a demanding multiple even allowing for the prices consumers are prepared to pay for something fancy between two slices of plain bread.

But Hazlewood is looking beyond this deal at a market worth £2.6 billion a year and growing at a rate of 7 per cent annually. The company is already the largest supplier to UK retailers and needs additional capacity, particularly in London. Hence, the purchase of Breadwinner Foods and its new factory at Park Royal.

Hazlewood has enjoyed a rerating in the past six months, not least because of a growing appreciation of the sandwich market among City traders regularly feeding themselves from Pret A Manger and its ilk. The shares have almost doubled since June.

The company has worked hard to shed its reputation for nasty surprises. It has divested low-margin businesses and invested heavily in chilled foods, strengthening links with upmarket retailers like M&S.

At 188½p yesterday the shares trade on 14 times prospective earnings for the current year, falling to 13 next year. The City's appetite for Hazlewood should soon see the shares above 200p, though the pace of recent progress must slow.



Molins

OVER the past year, Molins has distinguished itself only by its status as the third-worst-performing stock in the FTSE All-share. A barrage of profit warnings have sunk its shares from 970p to 270p. As if to stop the pain, it has now called for the head of its chief executive.

This will solve nothing. Peter Harrisson took over a company heavily dependent on the US and Chinese tobacco machinery markets. Both have collapsed — and there is nothing Molins or its rivals can do about it.

Officially, the shares are valued at 8.5 times the earnings it is expected to make if it returns to the black next year. But privately the City will admit that the troubles in China — its largest profit earner — are almost impossible to quantify.

The other key issue — how much US tobacco firms will have to spend after settling litigation claims — is no less clear. With facts hard to come by, present forecasts are little more than stabs in the dark. This makes the shares a gamble, at least until a new chief executive arrives and details his recovery plan.

Shareholders who have already lost nearly three quarters of their money might as well hang on, though for the next 12 months a takeover looks the best hope for any significant recovery. Those tempted to buy on bad news would find better value at the roulette table.

Shield

SHIELD Diagnostics, beloved of speculators and rumour-mongers, is still managing to deliver the goods to justify the hype. Yesterday's licensing deal with Abbott Laboratories provides a first-class endorsement of the potential of its heart disease test.

Although Shield is still waiting for the results of a key medical study, there is little doubt that the test will prove itself. The greater risks lie in commercialisation and in securing a meaningful share of the market for cholesterol testing. Since licensing negotiations seemed to take up most of last year, it is disappointing to learn that it will take another 18 months to adapt the Shield test for Abbott's instruments.

Cholesterol testing took many years to acquire its current popularity, and it will not be easily dislodged, even allowing for the greater reliability of the Shield test.

Shield is giving nothing away, but it seems it might receive 15 to 20 per cent of revenues that, it hopes, will be measured in hundreds of millions of pounds. If this is right, back of the envelope calculations suggest that the shares, up another 105p to 777½p yesterday, still have much further to go. Wary investors might prefer to take some profits.

EDITED BY PAUL DURMAN

COMMODITIES

LIFFE COCOA

WHITE SUGAR (FOB)

ICIS-LOR (London 6.00pm) CRUDE OILS ($/barrel FOB)

PRODUCTS ($/MT)

GNI LONDON GRAIN FUTURES

IPE FUTURES (GNI Ltd) GAS OIL

BRENT (0.00pm)

MEAT & LIVESTOCK COMMISSION

LONDON METAL EXCHANGE

LIFFE OPTIONS

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol
Long Gilt	Mar 98	123.22	123.24	123.11	123.17	61345
Previous open interest 100010	Jun 98	107.08	107.15	107.02	107.11	771
German Govt Bond (Bund)	Mar 98	105.96	106.03	105.71	105.99	172220
Previous open interest 264919	Jun 98				106.37	0
German Govt Bond (Bobl)	Mar 98	104.93	105.02	104.91	105.01	959
Previous open interest 28262	Jun 98				104.61	0
Italian Govt Bond (BTP)	Mar 98	116.93	117.14	116.73	117.02	45943
Previous open interest 141016	Jun 98	116.18	116.47	116.30	116.49	547
Japanese Govt Bond (JGB)	Mar 98	128.95	128.68	128.15	128.37	[illegible]
	Jun 98	127.98	127.98	127.75	127.75	500
Three Mth Sterling	Mar 98	92.52	92.57	92.51	92.56	19972
Previous open interest 76903	Jun 98	92.63	92.68	92.63	92.68	27320
	Sep 98	92.79	92.84	92.77	92.83	22719
Three Mth Euromark	Mar 98	96.36	96.38	96.34	96.37	30552
Previous open interest 1854952	Jun 98	96.15	96.22	96.17	96.21	37730
Three Mth Eurolira	Mar 98	94.37	94.39	94.29	94.30	22714
Previous open interest 169690	Jun 98	95.21	95.24	95.14	95.18	23470
Three Mth Euroswiss	Mar 98	98.51	98.53	98.48	98.52	7981
Previous open interest 149095	Jun 98	98.37	98.37	98.32	98.35	3860
Three Mth ECU	Mar 98	95.94	95.94	95.63	95.94	158
Previous open interest 38906	Jun 98	95.66	95.66	95.64	95.65	185
FTSE 100	Mar 98	5267.0	5279.0	5175.0	5195.0	7552
Previous open interest 346	Jun 98				5252.0	0

MONEY RATES (%)

Base Rates: Clearing Banks 7½ Finance Hse 8

Discount Market Loans: O/night high: 7½ Low 7½ Week fixed: 7 – 7

Treasury Bills (Dis): Buy: 2 mth 6⅞ ... 3 mth 6⅞ ... Sell: 2 mth 6⅞ ... 3 mth 6⅞ ...

	1 mth	2 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth
Prime Bank Bills (Dis):	7⅞-7⅞	7⅞-7⅞	7⅞-7⅞	7⅞-7⅞	
Sterling Money Rates:	7⅞-7⅞	7⅞-7⅞	7⅞-7⅞	7⅞-7⅞	7⅞-7⅞
Interbank:	7⅞-7⅞	7⅞-7⅞	7⅞-7⅞	7⅞-7⅞	7⅞-7⅞

Overnight: open 7½ close 7½

Local Authority Deps:	7½	n/a	7½	7½	7½
Sterling CDs:	7⅞-7⅞	7⅞-7⅞	7⅞-7⅞	7⅞-7⅞	7⅞-7⅞
Dollar CDs:	5.51	n/a	5.52	5.53	5.57
Building Society CDs:	7⅞-7⅞	7⅞-7⅞	7⅞-7⅞	7⅞-7⅞	7⅞-7⅞

TREASURY BILLS: Applied 100bn allotted £100bn; Bids: 298.33% received: 99%; Last week: 258.258% received 90%. Avge rate 6.6850%. Last wk 6.8745%. Next week: £10bn

EUROPEAN MONEY DEPOSITS (%)

Currency	7 day	1 mth	3 mth	6 mth	Call
Dollar:	5⅝-5⅞	5⅝-5⅞	5⅝-5⅞	5⅝-5⅞	5-4¾
Deutschmark:	3⅛-3⅜	3⅛-3⅜	3⅛-3⅜	3⅛-3⅜	4-3
French Franc:	3⅞-4⅛	3⅞-4⅛	3⅞-4⅛	3⅞-4⅛	3⅞-3⅞
Swiss Franc:	1⅛-1	1⅛-1⅛	1⅛-1⅛	1⅛-1⅛	1⅛-1
Yen:	⅛-⅛	⅛-⅛	⅛-⅛	⅛-⅛	1-pair

GOLD/PRECIOUS METALS (Baird & Co)

Bullion: Open $291.00-291.30 Close: $290.50-290.80 High $297.60-298.10 Low: $289.30-290.00 AM: $291.45 PM: $291.00

Krugerrand: $300.00-302.00 (£151.00-153.00)

Platinum: $[illegible] (£229.10) Silver: $5.96 (£3.575) Palladium: $230.00 (£139.39)

STERLING SPOT AND FORWARD RATES

Mkt Rates for January 23

	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
Amsterdam	3.3380-3.3500	3.3425-3.3453	1½-1pr	3½-3pr
Brussels	61.90-61.370	61.120-61.223	23-14pr	63-56pr
Copenhagen	11.286-11.336	11.295-11.305	¼-pr	1-pr
Dublin	1.1011-1.1071	1.1020-1.1044	14-8pr	48-41pr
Frankfurt	2.9632-2.9737	2.9647-2.9674	1-pr	2½-2pr
Lisbon	300.26-304.17	301.31-301.86	¼-1pr	2½-1½pr
Madrid	251.30-252.15	251.49-251.69	59-40pr	129-101pr
Milan	2920.6-2924.6	2920.6-2924.6	36-20pr	108-86pr
Montreal	2.3983-2.4213	2.4167-2.4213	0.63-0.58pr	1.17-1.08pr
New York	1.6836-1.6864	1.6854-1.6864	0.28-0.24pr	0.76-0.73pr
Oslo	12.319-12.342	12.331-12.342	¼-pr	1-pr
Paris	9.9804-9.9850	9.9833-9.9851	3½-3pr	9½-9pr
Stockholm	13.139-13.159	13.131-13.141	¼-pr	¼-pr
Tokyo	208.91-210.13	209.84-210.13	1½-1½pr	3½-3½pr
Vienna	20.836-20.919	20.858-20.887	¼-pr	2-1½pr
Zurich	2.4085-2.4264	2.4085-2.4116	1½-1½pr	3½-3½pr

Premium - pr. Discount + dis.

FOREIGN RATES

Australia	1.5160-1.5172
Austria	12.61-12.62
Belgium (Com)	36.99-37.03
Canada	1.4540-1.4545
Denmark	6.5338-6.5358
France	6.0050-6.0100
Germany	1.7935-1.7940
Hong Kong	7.7415-7.7425
Ireland	1.3985-1.4005
Italy	1765.30-1767.30
Japan	126.40-126.45
Malaysia	4.5570-4.5620
Netherlands	2.0214-2.0219
Norway	7.4595-7.4670
Portugal	183.49-183.59
Singapore	1.7650-1.7680
Spain	152.04-152.07
Sweden	7.9461-7.9513
Switzerland	1.4639-1.4649

OTHER STERLING

Argentina peso*	1.6569-1.6596
Australia dollar	2.5118-2.5153
Bahrain dinar	0.6150-0.6200
Brazil real*	1.8534-1.8562
China yuan	13.526-13.826
Cyprus pound	0.8595-0.8785
Finland markka	8.9050-9.0460
Greece drachma	464.0-474.5
Hong Kong dollar	12.8175-12.8282
India rupee	62.98-64.28
Indonesia rupiah	n/a
Kuwait dinar KD	0.4950-0.5090
Malaysia ringgit	7.5422-7.5633
New Zealand dollar	2.8542-2.8594
Pakistan rupee	71.10 Buy
Saudi Arabia riyal	5.9400-6.0750
Singapore dollar	2.9195-2.9260
S Africa rand (com)	8.0450-8.2140
U A E dirham	5.9925-6.1285

Barclays Treasury Lloyds Bank

FTSE VOLUMES

3i	416	Land Secs	440
AMVESCAP	3,800	Legal & Gn	1,900
ASDA Gp	4,500	Lloyds TSB	5,900
Abbey Ntl	1,700	LucasVarity	3,600
Allnce & Leic	1,200	Marks Spr	4,500
Allied Dom	1,100	NatWst Bk	3,200
AB Foods	170	Nat Grid	2,800
BAA	1,300	Nat Power	1,900
BAT Inds	4,500	Next	1,200
BG	6,400	Norwich Un	4,500
BOC	1,600	Nycomd Amer	261
BP	12,100	Orange	3,500
BSkyB	3,400	P & O	1,100
BTR	19,600	Pearson	1,100
BT	22,300	PowerGen	6,900
Bk of Scot	4,200	Prudential	3,400
Barclays	3,200	Railtrack	2,500
Bass	1,900	Rank Group	4,800
Billiton	4,600	Reckitt Col	514
Blue Circle	5,700	Reed Intl	1,800
Boots	1,600	Rentokil	5,500
BAe	876	Reuters	3,500
BA	12,300	Rio Tinto	3,100
Brit Energy	7,600	Rolls Royce	4,400
British Land	979	Royal & Sun	3,200
Brit Steel	4,900	Royal Bk Sct	3,500
Cable Wire	12,200	Safeway	3,500
Cadbury	2,900	Sainsbury	2,200
Carlton Cms	1,800	Schroders	118
Centrica	3,800	Scot & New	541
Cns Union	1,100	Scot Power	2,300
Diageo	21,500	Svrn Trent	935
Dixons	2,400	Shell Trans	16,500
EMI	12,300	Siebe	545
Energy Gp	693	SmKl Bch	10,800
Enterpr Oil	1,600	Smiths Inds	439
GKN	704	Std Chartd	1,400
GRE	4,600	Sun Life	1,100
GUS	1,900	Tesco	2,500
Gen Acc	814	Thames W	1,600
Gen Elec	3,900	Tomkins	1,200
Glaxo Well	4,000	Unilever	5,900
Granada	826	Utd Utilities	1,000
HSBC	2,900	Utd News	2,100
Halifax	8,100	Vodafone	6,700
Hays	588	Whitbread	495
ICI	1,900	Williams	3,100
Kingfisher	2,000	Wolseley	2,000
LASMO	4,500	Woolwich	3,100
Ladbroke	2,200	Zeneca	1,600

WALL STREET

	Jan 23 midday	Jan 22 close
AMP Inc	39	39
AMR Corp	120½	120½
AT & T	65⅞	65⅞
Abbott Labs	69⅝	70⅛
Advanced Micro	18⅞	18⅞
Aetna Life	74⅞	74⅞
Airtouch Com	41⅞	42⅞
Albertson's	66⅞	67⅞
Alcoa Aluminum	28⅞	28⅞
Allied Signal	36	36⅞
Amer Co of Air	68⅞	67⅞
Amerada Hess	52⅞	53
AEP	50⅞	50⅞
Amer Express	78⅞	80⅞
Amer Genl Corp	59⅞	59⅞
Amer Home Pr	62⅞	63
Amer Intl	109⅞	104⅞
Amer Stores	21⅞	22⅞
Amer Standard	40⅞	40⅞
Ameritech	50⅞	50⅞
Amgen	68⅞	67⅞
Amoco	79⅞	80⅞
Andrew Corp	27⅞	28
Anheuser-Busch	44⅞	45⅞
Apple Computer	19⅞	19⅞
Archer Daniels	21⅞	22⅞
Armco	4⅞	4⅞
Armstrong Wrld	75⅞	72⅞
Asarco	20⅞	20⅞
Atl Richfield	76⅞	77⅞
Atmel Corp	8⅞	8⅞
Auto Data Pro	60⅞	61
Avery Dennison	42⅞	42⅞
Avon Products	58	59⅞
Baker Hughes	35⅞	35⅞
Baltimore Gas & El	31⅞	31⅞
Banc One	51⅞	52⅞
BankAmerica	85	85⅞
Bank of NY	52⅞	53⅞
Bankers Tr NY	104⅞	105⅞
Bausch & Lomb	41⅞	41⅞
Baxter Intl	53⅞	53⅞
Becton Dickinson	38⅞	38⅞
Bell Atlantic	90⅞	91
BellSouth	59⅞	60⅞
Best Foods	100⅞	101⅞
Black & Decker	43⅞	43⅞
Block (H&R)	41⅞	41⅞
Boeing	44⅞	45⅞
Boise Cascade	29⅞	30⅞
Boston Scien	48⅞	48⅞
Bristol Myrs Sq	95⅞	95⅞
Browning Ferris	36⅞	36⅞
Brunswick	28⅞	29⅞
Burlington Nthn	87⅞	88
CMS Energy Corp	44	44⅞
CBS	50⅞	50
CPC Corp	29⅞	30⅞
Campbell Soup	57⅞	57⅞
Carolina Pwr	41⅞	41⅞
Case Corp	57⅞	57⅞
Caterpillar	45⅞	45⅞
Centerior & SW	26⅞	27⅞
Champion Int	48⅞	49
Chase Manhat	101	101⅞
Chevron Corp	74⅞	75⅞
Chrysler	34	34⅞
Chubb Corp	77⅞	77⅞
Cigna Corp	176⅞	176⅞
Citicorp	113	114⅞
Clorox	75⅞	76⅞
Coastal Corp	53⅞	54⅞
Coca Cola	64⅞	65⅞
Coca Cola Ent	31⅞	32⅞
Colgate-Palm	69⅞	69⅞
Columbia Energy	74⅞	75⅞
ColumbiaHCA	26⅞	27⅞
Compaq Comp	31⅞	31⅞
Comp Ass Intl	48⅞	49⅞
Conagra	31⅞	31⅞
Cons Edison	40⅞	40⅞
Cons Nat Gas	54⅞	55⅞
Cooper Inds	47⅞	48⅞
Coorstek	79⅞	77⅞
Corning Inc	38	36
Cyprus Cmtl	43⅞	44⅞
Dana Corp	48⅞	48⅞
Darden Restaurants	10⅞	12
Deere	51	51⅞
Delta Air Lines	116⅞	117⅞
Deluxe Corp	33⅞	33⅞
Digital Equip	44⅞	46⅞
Disney (Walt)	91⅞	90⅞
Dominion Res	40	40⅞
Donnelley (RR)	36	36⅞
Dover Corp	33⅞	33⅞
Dow Chemical	88⅞	91⅞
Dow Jones	51⅞	51⅞
Dresser	35⅞	35⅞
Duke Power	53⅞	54⅞
Dun & Bradstreet	34⅞	34⅞
Du Pont	55⅞	55⅞
Eastman Chem	58⅞	58⅞
Eastman Kodak	64⅞	64⅞
Eaton Corp	69⅞	69⅞

	Jan 23 midday	Jan 22 close
Edison Int	27⅞	27⅞
Elect Data Sys	43⅞	43⅞
Emerson Elec	61⅞	62⅞
Engelhard Corp	18⅞	17⅞
Enron Corp	42⅞	42⅞
Entergy	28⅞	28⅞
Ethyl Corp	7⅞	7⅞
Exxon	80⅞	80⅞
FMC Corp	64⅞	64⅞
FPL Group	57⅞	57⅞
Federal Express	64⅞	65⅞
Fifth Third Bank	76⅞	78
First Fid Grp	68⅞	69⅞
Fluor Corp	37⅞	38⅞
Ford Motor	48⅞	49⅞
Fort James	42⅞	43⅞
Fortune Brands	37⅞	37⅞
Franklin Res	39	39⅞
GTE Corp	53⅞	53⅞
Gannett	57⅞	58
Gap Inc Del	39⅞	39⅞
Gateway 2000	37⅞	37⅞
Gen Dynamics	84⅞	85⅞
Gen Electric	74⅞	75⅞
Gen Mills	72⅞	73⅞
Gen Motors	56⅞	57⅞
Gen Reinsurance	207⅞	209⅞
Gen Signal	39⅞	39
Genuine Parts	32⅞	33⅞
Georgia Pac	57⅞	57⅞
Gillette	102⅞	102⅞
Glaxo Wellc ADR	51⅞	52⅞
Goodrich (BF)	41⅞	42⅞
Goodyear Tire	62⅞	62⅞
Great Lakes	43⅞	43⅞
Halliburton	43⅞	43⅞
Harcourt General	51⅞	52⅞
Heinz (HJ)	59⅞	59⅞
Hercules	40⅞	40⅞
Hershey Foods	60⅞	61⅞
Hewlett Packard	61⅞	62⅞
Hilton Hotels	29⅞	29⅞
Home Depot	89⅞	89⅞
Homestake Mng	9⅞	8⅞
Honeywell	68⅞	68⅞
Household Intl	116⅞	121⅞
Houston Inds	25⅞	25⅞
Humana	19⅞	19⅞
ITT Corp	81⅞	81⅞
Ikon Office	28⅞	29⅞
Illinois Tool	55⅞	56⅞
Illinova	30⅞	30
INCO	15⅞	15⅞
Ingersoll Rand	37⅞	38⅞
Inland Steel	18⅞	19⅞
Intel Corp	77⅞	78⅞
IBM	99⅞	99⅞
Intl Flav & Fr	43⅞	44⅞
Intl Paper	44⅞	45⅞
Jason & Jonse	66⅞	67⅞
Kellogg	47⅞	48⅞
Kerr-McGee	59⅞	59⅞
Kimberly-Clark	52⅞	53⅞
Kmart	10⅞	10⅞
Knight-Ridder	55⅞	56⅞
Lilly (ER)	66⅞	67⅞
Limited Inc	29⅞	28⅞
Lincoln Nat	75⅞	75⅞
Linas	56⅞	56⅞
Liz Claiborne	39⅞	40
Lockheed Martin	103⅞	104
Lorillard Tob

A payout of injustice

COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

Once again, the financial services industry stands accused of gross avarice verging on sheer robbery. The only defence it can possibly offer is one of confusion and incompetence.

Either way, this sequel to the pensions mis-selling debacle will be unlikely to aid the Government's plans for persuading the British public to look more to the private sector and less to the welfare state.

Few individuals would voluntarily sign up to buy a set of the emperor's new clothes once they had recognised that that there was nothing there, but it seems that several million are paying regular monthly premiums for insurance which is apparently worthless. The repayment protection policies which are intended to service loans should the holder become unemployed are not what they seem. Should the dole queue beckon and the policy start to pay, the Government has the right to deduct the cash from any income-related state benefits, such as the job-seekers allowance. So all those monthly premiums have bought the payer nothing but, potentially, saved some more cash for Gordon Brown's pre-election war chest.

These policies tend to be sold rather than bought, and it is hard to resist the conclusion that the sellers may have omitted mention of this rather steep downside to their product. Neither is there any reassurance to be found in the excuses that they were unaware of something which has apparently been the law for several years, albeit not always applied.

But apart from giving Helen Liddell another reason to get out her slate and indulge in some more naming and shaming, this sorry tale does highlight the quandary Mr Blair and his team must address if their efforts to reform the welfare state are to progress beyond the rhetoric.

Are those who prudently provide for rainy days to be entirely deprived of the state umbrella? The need to cajole people into taking out second pensions, preferably not mis-sold, is widely accepted as the bill for providing a decent level of state pension for an increasingly long-living population becomes unwieldy. Compulsion seems inevitable.

But what level of saving should be an optional way of increasing living standards? When those who have saved up for a comfortable old age see their assets being sold to fund the same long-term care that their spendthrift neighbours are enjoying courtesy of the state, in creeps a sense of injustice. In some cases, it is so strong as to encourage the newly retired to embark on a spree.

Sorting out a fair system of tax and benefits goes far beyond dealing with the plights and rights of single mothers. The daunting task has been laid upon the shoulders of Martin Taylor, who may be able to see his way through the muddle while coping with a few local difficulties at Barclays.

If he has time, he might take a look at the repayment protection policies being vigorously touted by Barclayloan.

Economy is too steady for Eddie

Question: when does a soft landing turn into a hard landing? Answer: when steady but portly Eddie George jumps on the economy from a great height. Unfortunately, such hooligan behaviour by the Governor seems quite likely. For several months now, hardly any ordinary citizens or business folk have been under the impression from their own experiences that the British economy was overheating. Only with the aid of statistics, computer programs and a touch of paranoia could this be deduced by economists and policymakers.

The Bank of England appears to believe that unless we are overtaken by a constant stream of sneering slugs, sarcastic snails and three-legged tortoises, the economy must be advancing at excessive speed. Thanks to calculations of breathtaking subtlety, the Bank also deduces that if inflation is on target at 2.5 per cent and the economy is growing at 2.25 per cent, we are doomed to accelerating inflation if people's pay grows at 4.75 per cent a year.

Even if you rely on statistics and arcane economic models, the economy now appears to be slowing quite fast enough of its own accord. City forecasters thought that gross domestic product had grown by between 0.6 and 0.7 per cent in the final quarter of 1997. According to the first rough official estimate, it actually grew just 0.5 per cent.

That compares with 0.8 per cent or 1.1 per cent in each of the four previous quarters. If such momentum is confirmed, 1998 growth looks headed to below 2.3 per cent, the rate which the Bank believes, as an article of faith, to be the most we can manage without blowing up.

Even that does not allow for the Asian effect. One member of the Bank's Monetary Policy Committee thinks this could cut UK output by 0.75 per cent a year, in which case business is liable to hit the floor with a crack.

That member was, however, Deanne Julius, who comes from the business world. Mr George has not been so convinced. He also appears to want a hard landing. With an insider's knowledge of the figures, the Governor argued that only a rapid descent to below-trend growth could save his inflation target. If the committee puts up interest rates next month, just to be on the safe side, sterling would rise further against the mark and a weakening dollar. The imbalance between shrinking manufacturing and expanding services would widen. And the Bank's political credibility would be put at risk. Surely, they will not be so daft.

BT's just not getting through

Microsoft's bid that never was for BT at least caused a little amusement on a cold January day. But the fact that some people were prepared to believe such a thing, however temporarily, points quite accurately to a problem that will not go away for BT — the lack of a plausible international strategy for the telecommunications group.

In the UK, the approach is clear — trying to maximise revenues in an increasingly competitive market with cable companies and even more recent upstarts nipping at its heels. In Europe the policy of taking stakes and creating partnership as deregulation gathers pace is absolutely the right one but the fevered speculation will not end until something occupies the space reserved for MCI. Perhaps MCI was not quite such a wonderful deal as BT executives believed but at least it gave the initial appearance of a strategy. A $7 billion windfall later this year will be nice — if WorldCom manages to consummate its deal — but is ultimately no substitute for an entry into the largest single market of them all. BT is very aware of this and now has two teams of marriage brokers touring the Americas, North and South, looking for a new stand-in partner for the jilted bride.

Until they come up with something, and of course it would be unwise to rush such a process through a sense of desperation, then BT does not have a fully satisfying stategy for its future. Before long, we will hear the names of Richard Branson or Lord Saatchi mooted as potential marriage partners.

Cutting it close

RANSOMES' future is on a knife-edge after Abtrust and Invesco, the two dissident holders of the lawnmower-maker's preference shares, caved in and accepted Textron's offer. The Americans now have 89.68 per cent of the prefs and need 90 per cent by Monday. Neither the management nor the major shareholders want Ransomes to stay independent, but the obduracy or inertia of some small investors could block Textron.

Derwent in £96m purchase

Derwent Valley Holdings, which specialises in property investment in Central London, is buying 14 properties from MEPC for £96.5 million, it was announced yesterday.

The acquisition will be partly funded via a £53.4 million rights issue of one new share for every four held at 520p a share, underwritten by SBC Warburg Dillon Read. Existing shares fell 2p to 592½p. The acquisition requires shareholder approval.

Eight of the 14 properties are in Central London, making up 71 per cent of the portfolio value. The portfolio's net rental income is £7.62 million.

Hazlewood buy

Hazlewood Foods is acquiring Breadwinner Foods, a London sandwich supplier, for £14 million. The company is also assuming debts of £600,000. In the year to June Breadwinner earned profits of £200,000 on sales of £9.3 million. Hazlewood makes two million sandwiches a week at two sites in the UK and two on the Continent. Breadwinner has a new 50,000 sq ft factory at Park Royal, London. Tempus, page 28

Clear deal

Card Clear, the supplier of credit card payment and fraud prevention services, is buying HTEC Group, a supplier of retail loyalty systems, for £24.5 million. The acquisition is being classified as a reverse takeover and Card Clear shares were suspended at 47p yesterday. HTEC, based in Southampton, earned pre-tax profits of £2.6 million on sales of £19.3 million in the year to the end of September.

Cookson's gem

Cookson, the UK industrial materials company, has acquired the jewellery components division of America's Inverness Corp for a maximum, profit-related consideration of $53.7 million (£32.5 million). Inverness earned pre-tax profits of $7 million in 1997 on turnover of $34 million. Cookson will pay $38.7 million initially and the balance over three years.

Northern Foods prepares to bale out of milk market

By Fraser Nelson

NORTHERN FOODS, the Goodfella's pizzas to Dale Farm group, is to retreat from the fiercely competitive milk market by demerging its dairy division, which is valued at around £500 million.

The company said that it is in "advanced stages" of demerger plans which would end its 117-year history as a dairy producer, and see it emerge as a pure food producer half its current size. Its shares jumped 8p to 288p — close to the 291p high set five years ago — as the City said the deal should lift much of the gloom which has depressed its market value for the past four years.

The move came as the Milk Marque, which controls most of the milk supplied in England and Wales, said it had failed to force through a previously announced price increase. Milk prices are determined at six-monthly auctions and the failure to rise prices at two successive auctions means they will remain static until July.

The Marque, which acts as a go-between for farmers and distributors, said it had been undercut by supermarkets using their own buying agents. It managed to find buyers for 85 per cent of its milk at the inflated prices, but needed 90 per cent to secure a deal. It will now try to retender all the milk marked down by 0.6p, or 3 per cent, to 21p a litre — a repeat of its failed attempt to increase prices last June.

David Yeomans, chief executive of Milk Marque, said: "We had every reason to believe that the market would clear our indicative prices because markets have been stronger that they were last summer. These new prices represent excellent value for money for processors but inevitably will result in lower prices for farmers."

Haskins: discussions

Christopher Haskins, the Northern Foods chairman, has long been seeking partners to restore margins on its dairy business, which last year returned profits of £44.8 million. Although industry observers have declared the need for consolidation, Mr Haskins has been unable to agree a merger with any of the three dairy companies he has been in discussions with.

Last year it was in talks with Unigate, who was interested in buying the division for £350 million — a price which Mr Haskins is understood to have turned down. One analyst said: "This is by far the most logical option. The problem has been putting a value on the dairy companies, and a demerger will do just that. Also, shareholders can decide whether they want to hang around and see if the milk market will recover or sell and stick with the profitable core."

Tempus, page 28

Michael Orr, right, with Peter Harrisson who has agreed to leave with a £205,000 payoff

Chief quits troubled Molins

By Fraser Nelson

MOLINS, the tobacco machinery company whose shares have fallen 73 per cent in the past year, has parted company with Peter Harrisson, its chief executive.

Mr Harrisson, who joined the company two years ago, has agreed to resign with a £205,000 payoff — even though his contract entitled him to claim at least £320,000.

Michael Orr, chairman, said Mr Harrisson's departure was not connected to the £13.4 million black hole found in its accounts last year nor the £5.5 million loss it is now heading towards.

He said: "His departure was all about a difference in opinion about the future of the company." Peter Grant, finance director, will take over as acting chief executive.

Mr Harrisson will receive one year's salary — £160,000 — plus £45,000 in pension payments. Molins shares, worth £10.37 18 months ago, fell a further 5 per cent yesterday to close at 270p.

Tempus, page 28

JRA staff levels up as sales increase

By Caroline Merrell

NEW business at J Rothschild Assurance (JRA), the life insurance company owned by St James's Place Capital (SJPC), rose 20 per cent last year, and its salesforce increased from 763 to 813.

Sales of all product classes rose, with annual life premiums up 31 per cent to £20.3 million and annual pensions premiums rising 12 per cent to £30.8 million. Mike Wilson, chief executive, said that the company aims to have a salesforce of 1,000. Each salesman generated new premium income of £130,000, more than double the industry average.

JRA was launched six years ago with the backing of SJPC, of which Sir Mark Weinberg, founder of Abbey Life and Allied Dunbar, is chairman. Mr Wilson says that JRA is now worth £500 million. The original aim was to float after five years. However, instead of flotation it reversed into SJPC last year.

Mr Wilson said he envisaged more rationalisation in the life insurance industry as the smaller, less competitive companies are squeezed out of the market. He said: "There will probably be around 30 or 40 companies by the year 2000, compared with the 100 now."

Shield boosted by new licensing deal

By Paul Durman

SHIELD Diagnostics moved one step closer to creating a $500 million-a-year business from its heart disease test, when it finally secured a licensing deal with Abbott Laboratories, the leading medical devices group.

Excitement about the test's potential, which measures blood clotting agent activated factor 12 (AFT), made the small Dundee company one of the stock market's best performers last year. Its shares rose from 140p to end the year above 700p.

Shield has granted Abbott the right to distribute a version of the AFT test for use with Abbott's IMx instrument, used in more than 25,000 laboratories worldwide. David Evans, Shield's managing director, said it would take a further 18 months to adapt and automate the existing test.

Mr Evans believes that AFT could win a 20 per cent share of 500 million cholesterol tests conducted each year within five years.

At $5 a test, total AFT-linked revenues could reach $500 million, although Shield would receive only a fraction of this. Mr Evans said Shield would make its money through manufacturing AFT kits and from an undisclosed royalty on Abbott's sales.

Efforts are also being made to secure additional distribution deals which would help to increase market penetration.

Shield's shares rose 105p to 777½p, having at one stage reached 800p.

Tempus, page 28

Chairman unearths Antofagasta windfall

By Adam Jones

AN "AMATEUR" passion for geology is paying dividends for Chile's Andronico Luksic and his family.

Their Luksic Group is to receive $42.8 million (£266 million) from Antofagasta, the UK-listed company chaired by Mr Luksic and controlled by the family, for its share in a mining project.

Long before the family took control at Antofagasta in 1979, Mr Luksic sniffed out a copper mining opportunity in Chile, which was duly mined in a small way in the 1950s and left fallow ever since.

The El Tesoro mining project has now proved to be a lucrative find. It is to be developed at a cost of $280 million after an independent feasibility study by Kvaerner Metals revealed that it was technically feasible and viable. The development is a joint venture with Equatorial Mining Limited, a subsidiary of Australian Mutual Provident Society.

Chris Jowett, Antofagasta's financial controller, said: "The chairman has been an amateur geologist all his life. In the 1950s, he picked up a number of mining rights, particularly in copper."

The deal must be approved by the other Antofagasta shareholders given Mr Luksic's position as chairman, shareholder and seller.

Antofagasta has extensive mining and transport interests in Chile. The money for the purchase will be raised through the issue of seven million new shares in the company.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

DRUG DEALS

"Within Jan Leschly's grasp lay one of the biggest deals in corporate history. For a few moments, however, there was a danger of SmithKline Beecham's merger with the US drugs giant, American Home Products, slipping away..."

Business Focus — The Sunday Times tomorrow

Bank takeover will create largest company in Canada

From Oliver August in New York

THE Royal Bank of Canada has agreed to buy Bank of Montreal in a C$17 billion (£7.5 billion) stock swap, creating the largest Canadian company. The combined bank will have 85,000 employees and a market capitalisation of £15.5 billion.

Canadian banks had been slow to follow the international consolidation trend in the banking sector. But combining the Royal Bank and Bank of Montreal will create North America's third-largest bank in terms of assets behind Citicorp and Chase Manhattan.

John Cleghorn, executive chairman of Royal Bank, said: "This will create a Canadian-based, internationally competitive bank with a strong North American platform which allows us to cost-effectively deliver quality products and services to Canadians."

The last Canadian bank merger was in 1961, when Canadian Bank and Imperial Bank of Commerce formed the then largest bank in Canada.

The regulatory hurdles to be cleared before the deal can go ahead are higher than in other recent bank merger, such as the creation of Morgan Stanley, Dean Witter, Discovery. A Canadian law preventing the country's big five banks from merging needs to be lifted.

After the announcement of the merger, shares in the other three banks soared and a general shake-up in the Canadian banking sector is anticipated. Canadian Imperial Bank, Bank of Nova Scotia and Toronto-Dominion Bank may seek foreign buyers.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia $	2.51	2.43
Austria Sch	21.87	20.21
Belgium Fr	64.39	59.43
Canada $	2.531	2.342
Cyprus Cyp£	0.915	0.844
Denmark Kr	11.89	11.00
Finland Mkk	9.53	8.78
France Fr	10.4	9.62
Germany Dm	3.13	2.88
Greece Dr	497	458
Hong Kong $	13.85	12.45
Iceland	131	111
Ireland Pt	1.23	1.14
Israel Shk	6.32	5.87
Italy Lira	3099	2862
Japan Yen	224.23	206.70
Malta	0.684	0.625
Netherlds Gld	3.534	3.239
New Zealand $	3.01	2.77
Norway Kr	12.95	12.01
Portugal Esc	316.03	294.00
S Africa Rd	8.88	7.92
Spain Pta	262.79	244.00
Sweden Kr	13.97	12.87
Switzerland Fr	2.57	2.35
Turkey Lira	361008	341128
USA $	1.782	1.679

Rates for small denomination banknotes only as supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday

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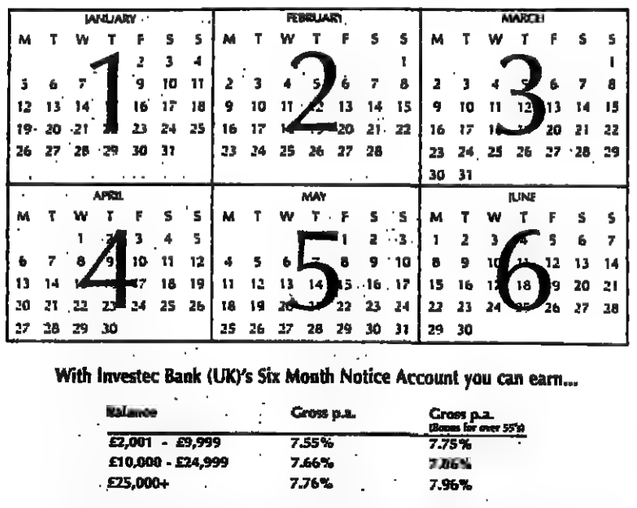

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JANUARY 24 1998

FA CUP PART-TIMERS DRESSED TO KILL A GIANT

Stevenage job lot ready to tax Newcastle

By Russell Kempson

EVEN Victor Green, the voluble, inexhaustible chairman of Stevenage Borough, had had enough. "Hello," his mobile message service said. "If you're calling me about FA Cup tickets, put the phone down immediately." The tickets had gone, long gone, the media pack was conducting its final interviews and the boardroom was clearing. It was time for quiet contemplation of what lay ahead.

Stevenage, fifteenth in the Vauxhall Conference, play Newcastle United, tenth in the FA Carling Premiership and 97 places above them in the football pyramid, in the FA Cup fourth round at Broadhall Way tomorrow. The £200-a-game part-timers against the £20,000-a-week professionals; the anonymous teachers and salesmen against instantly recognisable internationals; David tackles Goliath, minnow versus giant.

Rarely before has a tie captured the imagination of so many and on such a global scale. Kenyan television requested pen pictures of the players. Radio Johannesburg interviewed Paul Fairclough, the manager, and reporters rang from Norway in a state of distress. "Where is this Steven-arger?" they asked.

The Borough Clubcall line took 10,000 minutes of calls in 24 hours; the Internet site recorded 1,800 hits a day from 30 countries; Sunderland supporters spent £450 on ten Stevenage shirts so they could wear them around the North East and antagonise their rivals. Begging letters arrived by the dozen.

Media passes numbered 123 at the last count and VIPs have had to be catered for. Tony Banks, the Minister for Sport, will be present, as will Barbara Follett, the Labour MP for Stevenage, and her husband, Ken, the author. Tony Blair may also pay a visit to see his beloved Newcastle. Gary Mabbutt, the Tottenham Hotspur captain, has paid for his ticket.

It is no ordinary match and all because Newcastle, the six-times FA Cup-winners, rashly decided that Stevenage would be unable to stage it at their tiny ground in Hertfordshire, alongside the St Margaret Clitherow Junior School. Newcastle objected, appealed and lost, incurring the scorn of disgusted Geordies and neutrals alike.

"I've never known a cup-tie, apart from a few finals, to have generated so much interest," Fairclough said. "It looks like 95 per cent of the people want us to win. The players have been like performing monkeys, what with all the attention, but they've shown a really refreshing, boyish attitude."

At 4.30pm tomorrow, Stevenage will take a deep breath: at Broadhall Way, into which 8,700 spectators will be shoehorned, and in the town's arts and leisure centre, in which 750 fans will pay £6 each to watch a 15ft-square screen.

All week, the ground has echoed to the sound of scaffolders constructing the temporary stand. Problems have been overcome, disputes diffused, but one remains. Boro Bear, the mascot, is still without a clean crop of hair. Nobody can find a washing machine big enough to fit his head.

Football Saturday, pages 35-37

BACK ROW (left to right): Darren Rogers (telecommunications engineer/left back), Michael Love (driver/utility player), Ryan Kirby (warehouse assistant/right back), Stuart Beevor (salesman/midfield player), Richard Wilmot (bank employee/goalkeeper), Steve Perkins (teacher/midfield player), Simon Stapleton (football coach/midfield player), Gary Crawshew (delivery driver/forward), Jamie March (driver/left back), Jason Soloman (operations administrator/midfield player).
FRONT ROW: Niall Inman (student/winger), Darren Fenton (forklift truck driver/midfield player), Neil Trabble (fitness coach/forward), Des Gallagher (surveyor/goalkeeper), Steve Holden (courier/defender), Robin Trott (painter-decorator/defender), Giuliano Grazioli (mechanic/forward), Dean Wordsworth (barman/forward), James Dillnutt (student/defender), Paul Fairclough (full-time manager).
Television: Sky Sports 2, 4pm, tomorrow

PHOTOGRAPHS
Marc Aspland and Mike Powell

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UK Equity Safeguard	109.36	116.96	+ 0.51	3.47
Dn RAV to Mar 20	105.85	105.85		
Cash	953.02	954.82	+ 1.00	5.75
UK Growth Funds				
UK Equity Gen	377.50	400.60	- 3.10	1.65
UK Smlr Cos	82.32	88.04	+ 0.52	0.49
FTSE 250 Index	99.54	106.49	+ 0.53	2.11
Gilt/Fixd Int Inc	2359.12	2430.44	6.00	5.75
Income Funds				
Corp Bd	82.93	85.86	+ 0.14	
Monthly Inc	42.95	45.59	+ 0.02	9.72
International Funds				
American Gen	287.60	304.90	- 2.20	
American Smlr	377.27	403.05	+ 1.34	
US US Index	2307.61	2431.38	- 13.00	4.00
European Gen	332.50	351.60	+ 5.50	0.68
European Smlr	142.17	152.04	- 1.83	
Japan Gen	109.60	116.50	+ 1.10	
Asia Pacific	80.09	83.84	- 0.12	1.08
Pacific Smlr	90.88	99.33	+ 0.62	
Emerg Mkts	161.04	172.24	- 4.68	
Latin America	98.11	104.92	+ 0.74	
Jpn Smlr	162.60	172.89	+ 1.04	
Enhanced Exempt	160.30	166.20	+ 0.10	2.29
Global Strategy	44.60	47.67	- 0.09	
ABBEY EQUITY & LAW UNIT TST MGRS				
0203 553 3311				
General Inc	851.20	905.50	- 0.10	2.51
General Acc	693.80	738.00		2.5
UK Growth Acc	589.00	626.50	- 0.20	2.48
UK Growth Inc	371.60	395.30	- 0.20	2.48
Higher Inc Acc #	1101.00	1171.00	+ 1.00	4.66
Higher Inc Inc #	565.40	601.40	+ 0.70	4.66
Gilt/Fixd Int Acc	236.10	249.20	+ 0.40	5.53
Gilt/Fixd Int Inc	96.32	103.60	+ 0.20	5.53
Nth America	414.20	440.60	- 2.00	
Europe	453.90	483.50	+ 2.20	0.57
Bnd Exempt	116.50	123.90	0.30	2.31
Bnd Fxdmtlc Acc	148.40	157.90	- 0.30	2.41
Bnd Fxdmtlc Inc	95.11	101.20	- 0.50	2.41
Global Opp	111.20	118.20	+ 0.90	0.46
Balanced Inc	73.77	78.42	+ 0.08	2.35
Balanced Inc	67.45	71.75	+ 0.06	2.35
Japan Acc	38.23	37.48	+ 0.63	
Far Eastern Acc	251.30	267.30	- 2.00	2.50
ABBEY UNIT TST MGRS				
0345 717 373				
Gilt & Fixed Int	125.50	134.40	+ 0.40	5.79
High Inc Equity	223.80	233.10	+ 0.40	4.11
Worldwide Bond	274.50	291.10	- 2.00	3.44
American Growth	548.10	583.20	- 1.60	0.23
Asian Pacific	186.70	199.70		0.67
Growth & Earnings	251.80	276.30	- 2.40	2.71
Euro Capital Acc	247.10	264.30	+ 3.00	0.95
Extra Inc	42.28	44.90	+ 0.02	9.25
General	325.20	346.50	+ 3.60	2.83
Global Opps	75.06	79.85	+ 0.07	0.40
Japan	77.71	83.11	+ 2.80	
Managed Inc	84.60	90.30	+ 0.11	4.96
Japan Inc	184.50	197.30	- 0.90	1.13
US Emerging Cos	210.90	225.60	- 2.10	
Ethical	94.56	100.60	+ 0.92	1.82
International	138.40	147.20	- 0.70	0.58
Dedicated & Growth	82.06	87.30	+ 0.10	2.03
Global Cnsrv & Sec	78.37	83.87	+ 0.20	2.41
Latin America	71.01	75.94	- 1.90	0.89
Capital Reserve	154.80	164.80	+ 0.40	4.52
ABBEY NATIONAL UNIT TRUST MGRS LTD				
0141 275 8500				
NAP UK Growth	114.00	121.20	- 0.20	1.87
Equity Income #	167.60	172.90	+ 0.30	3.69
Extra Income #	210.00	224.30	- 0.20	4.95
Smaller Cos	102.40	108.90	- 0.40	2.04
International	129.60	137.80	+ 1.00	1.04
ABERDEEN PROUDFIT UT MGRS LTD				
Eng: (345) 446-446 Dlg: (0500) 023 340				
Amer Ord Acc	367.80	387.20	- 2.40	
Amer Inc	55.91	59.15†	+ 0.68	0.30
Ethical Inc	87.84	92.08†	- 1.15	0.65
Euro Gnth Acc	117.90	124.40	- 2.10	0.35
Euro Smlr Opps Acc	121.80	128.90	+ 2.00	
Extra Inc Inc	220.70	232.90†	+ 1.80	4.11
Extra Inc Acc	302.00	318.60	+ 2.40	4.11
PE Emg Econ	64.94	70.57†	- 1.74	0.74
Prspt Int Inc #	28.39	29.79	+ 0.06	7.98
Frontier Mk Inc	73.24	77.49	- 1.23	0.13
Fund Of Inv Inc #	194.80	205.13†	+ 4.83	8.15
Fund Of Inv Acc	412.65	438.69	+ 10.23	8.13
Gilt Inc Inc #	51.04	53.30†	+ 0.10	6.17
Global Bond Inc	41.32	43.10	- 0.27	4.18
Global Inc Acc	39.23	37.94†	- 0.30	4.47
Sector Inc Acc	46.00	48.75	+ 0.17	4.47
High Inc Inc	166.40	176.00	- 0.90	3.77
High Inc Acc	239.80	253.60	- 1.20	3.77
Japan Inc	149.01	157.53	- 2.64	
Latin Amer Inc	62.98	66.64	- 1.31	0.28
Smaller Inc Inc	61.64	65.21†	- 0.95	2.71
Smaller Cos Acc	90.28	95.62	+ 0.90	0.36
North Amer Inc	354.90	388.30	- 3.50	
North Amer Acc	299.20	298.60	- 2.90	
Pacific Inc	53.84	56.96	+ 0.30	0.12
Prop Shares Inc	97.57	103.24†	+ 4.07	1.12
Recovery Inc	105.30	111.40	- 0.20	2.11
Recovery Acc	119.60	126.60	- 0.30	2.11
Special Sit Inc	169.70	179.50	+ 1.30	1.57
Special Sit Acc	192.30	203.30	+ 1.70	1.57
Tech Inc	750.90	792.30	+ 0.10	
Tech Acc	750.90	792.30	+ 0.10	
UK Blue Chip Inc	111.60	118.00	+ 0.50	2.59
UK Blue Chip Acc	132.30	141.30	+ 0.50	2.59
UK Emg Co Inc	75.86	82.01†	+ 1.58	0.91
UK Gnrl Inc	70.14	73.82	- 0.49	1.16
World Pref Inc #	86.78	93.92†	+ 0.73	2.97
ABERFORTH UNIT TRUST MGRS LTD				
0121 236 0733				
UK Small Cos	2606.00	2611.00	- 3.00	
ADVANTIS UNIT TRUST MGRS LTD				
0171 256 5000				
Recvr Propert #	112.10	119.20		4.60
ALLCHURCHES INV MGMT SVS LTD				
01452 305 958				
Amely Income	110.57	117.32	- 0.54	1.70
Income Builder Inc	98.28	104.53†	+ 0.16	3.10
B & C E UNIT TRUST MGMT LTD				
01285 658 911				
Capital Ord Pens	126.50	134.90		
Fountain Pens Pens	81.74	84.92		
BAILLIE GIFFORD & CO LTD				
0131 232 4242				
Japanese Ord Cos	436.40	463.80	- 3.70	
Japan	173.60	183.90†	+ 0.30	0.43
Pacific	111.70	118.80†	+ 0.90	1.31
Europe	356.80	378.60	+ 2.80	
Euro Smlr Cos	126.30	133.60	+ 0.70	0.30
High Income #	70.55	75.05	- 0.31	5.45
Emerging	418.90	445.10†	- 2.50	4.02
Japan	298.30	305.80	- 0.80	
Latin American	102.30	108.70		
Pacific	82.77	88.78†	+ 0.16	1.29
UK Smlr Cos	63.77	65.78†	- 0.34	1.29
Japanese Smlr Cos	481.10	536.90	+ 24.00	
Strgt Fd	240.10	254.80	- 0.80	2.44
BANK OF WELLAND FUND MGRS LTD				
0171 489 8673				
Bnd & Stocks	431.40	456.00	- 2.40	0.77
Capital Gnth	164.10	173.80	+ 1.00	2.00
Smlr Opps	237.10	250.70	- 2.40	0.38
BARCLAYS FUNDS LTD				
Customer Hlp: Dlrg: 0131 522 4000				
Inc Inv Funds				
Cash	100.40	100.40†	+ 0.10	6.73
Cash Acc	122.00	122.00	+ 0.20	6.73
Income #	717.30	758.70†	- 9.20	3.97
Income Builder #	83.54	88.84	- 0.60	4.51
Balanced Funds				
Energy	109.90	115.50	+ 0.30	2.14
UK	531.10	571.10	- 1.50	2.03
Yield #	412.30	441.50	- 2.70	1.61
Property	295.60	297.70	- 1.50	9.66
Trustee	297.70	309.50†	+ 0.80	1.60
Growth Funds - UK				
Cap Gnl	187.70	197.60	+ 1.40	1.51
FTSE 100	123.40	141.70†	- 0.50	1.66
Growth Acc	581.30	618.00	- 3.90	1.36
Smlr Cos Inc	42.42	46.54	- 0.08	1.24
Smlr Cos Acc	75.24	80.25	- 0.10	1.24
Growth Funds - Overseas				
Americas	420.10	445.30	- 0.63	0.02
Emerging Growth	113.90	117.10	- 3.96	
Japan	95.10	104.70	- 3.96	
Japan Acc	103.10	109.70	- 3.00	
Japan Smlr Cos	81.63	87.45	+ 2.06	
Strategic	213.00	226.30†	- 1.70	0.96
Equity Investment Trusts				
Managed Income	47.76	51.66	- 0.04	7.10
Smlr Cos & Co	46.17	51.03	+ 0.16	3.54
Managed Growth	45.74	49.82	+ 0.24	0.98
BARING FUND MANAGERS LTD				
0171 214 1000				
Pacific Growth	190.95	195.10	- 0.35	
Tiger Cons Inc	172.75	183.50	+ 0.69	
Europe	142.60	153.10	- 2.30	0.23
Emg Income #	125.00	133.20†	- 2.70	5.20
Emerg Growth	107.73	115.10	- 3.20	0.90
Emerg Smlr	139.70	147.00	- 1.30	0.90
Global Bond	74.27	79.33†	+ 0.62	3.48
Global Growth	174.50	186.30	- 0.60	0.56
Global Smlr	97.10	103.60	- 0.60	0.56
Japan Smlr	87.18	91.38	- 5.20	
Korea Fund	32.19	34.39	- 1.36	
Portfolio	79.66	85.00	- 0.13	2.00
Inc Acc	175.20	180.90	- 0.70	2.00
UK Smlr	157.30	166.60	- 0.10	1.68
UK Smlr Cos	15.60	16.50	- 1.90	1.90
Smlr Managed	94.92	102.40	- 0.70	1.01
BLACKSTONE FRANKS UT MGRS LTD				
0171 250 3300				
UK Gilt Port Inc	134.40	141.00	+ 1.80	
Special Opps Inc	57.30	60.70	- 0.44	
BRITANNIA FUND MGRS LTD				
0141 223 6000				
Sustained Growth	46.72	154.59	+ 0.16	1.03
Abs Income	320.21	330.37	+ 0.37	1.03
Smlr Cos	137.20	134.73	- 0.19	0.46
Higher Yield #	73.07	75.41†	- 0.22	7.46
American Gth Inc	133.07	138.61	- 0.26	
European Growth	159.29	167.80	+ 3.32	
Abs Acc	357.76	372.25	+ 2.30	
United Pfd Inc	55.06	57.52	- 0.46	1.17
Abs Acc	67.70	70.46	- 0.54	1.17
Int Spec Opps	117.30	123.71	- 0.56	
Prpdn Gth	56.12	59.19†	- 0.46	0.52
UK Special #	117.37	123.71	- 1.51	2.75
Abs Acc	126.31	133.21	- 1.70	2.75
Japan	37.15	40.37	- 1.45	
Asia & Pacific	13.73	15.45	- 0.10	1.20
BURRAGE UNIT TST MGMT LTD				
0171 480 7215				
Stock Dlrd Gnl	67.29	68.15	+ 0.13	4.12
CIS UNIT MANAGERS LTD				
0161 837 5000				
Emerg	220.00	231.50†	- 2.10	1.47
UK Growth	272.46	288.30	- 1.20	1.73
Inc Income	164.70	205.90	- 2.46	3.56
CANADA LIFE MGMT (UK) LTD				
01707 822 100				
Can Gen Ord	274.50	[illegible]	- 0.20	1.17
Inc Income Ord	157.70	167.10	- 0.30	3.43
Abs Acc	[illegible]	98.00†	- 0.06	3.03
Gilt & Fixd Int	44.55	46.81	- 0.07	4.31
Growth Unit	[illegible]	250.30	- 0.20	1.55
Bond	192.33	202.30	+ 0.10	5.73
Inc Growth	227.33	241.90	- 1.90	0.00
North American	317.93	337.20	- 0.50	
Far East	163.58	174.90	- 1.20	1.21
UK Smaller Cos	166.30	177.00	+ 1.10	1.01
European	115.55	122.20	+ 1.90	0.32
Japanese Growth	25.83	31.63	- 0.45	
High Income	274.90	291.10	- 1.20	1.37
Europ Cntl Pfd	294.03	297.37	- 3.29	3.11
Pfd Inc	95.83	101.39	- 0.35	1.17
UK Income Inc	119.41	125.45	- 0.10	3.58
CAPEL-CURE MYERS UT MGMT LTD				
0161 831 7423 Enq: 0161 831 7423 Dlg: 0161 831 7455				
Sterling Bond	786.42	792.10	+ 1.50	
European	182.70	191.20	- 2.10	0.25
Smaller Cos Inc	112.20	113.00	- 0.40	1.61
Growth	654.20	728.00	+ 1.50	1.94
Income & Growth #	587.80	619.00†		4.15
Abs Return #	926.42	976.00	- 0.20	4.15
Asset & Gth	56.22	59.42	+ 0.16	
CARIUS UNIT TRUST MGRS LTD				
0171 377 0171				
Dec Inc	266.50	284.40	+ 0.40	
DRESDNER RCM FUNDS (UK) LTD				
Dealers: 0171 956 7354 Client Helpline: 0800 317573				
Formerly RCMT				
Amer Smlr Cos	191.80	204.00	- 0.20	
Asian Growth	156.90	165.80	- 2.70	0.40
Bond Income	110.10	114.30†	+ 0.10	6.60
European	239.40	253.90	+ 1.80	0.56
European Pfd	125.80	133.80†	+ 0.60	0.40
European Special	169.00	179.70	+ 5.90	
Gilt Yield	130.30	137.30†	+ 0.30	6.20
Global Eqty Inc	136.30	144.00†	+ 0.30	1.80
High Yield	205.00	218.00†	- 2.00	4.30
Japan	293.10	311.70	+10.60	
Japanese Special	129.70	137.90	+ 3.90	
Money Market	103.08	103.08†	+ 0.10	5.70
North American	139.70	148.50†	- 0.40	
Smaller Cos	165.70	176.20†	+ 0.30	0.80
Smlr Cos Dis	70.79	74.77	+ 0.48	3.50
Tomorrows Co Ex	1192.00	1209.00†	+ 9.00	0.10
UK Equity Growth	61.84	65.78	+ 0.24	1.10
UK Index Inc	423.10	450.20	+ 1.90	2.80
European Ins	118.30	125.00	+ 4.00	1.10
Global Income	252.80	268.70		3.00
Fleming Thornton				
European	411.20	430.50	+ 4.20	0.80
Europe Pfd	39.37	40.89	- 0.04	6.50
Emerg	663.90	900.50†	- 7.80	2.80
Global Em Mkt	70.30	73.61	- 0.87	0.80
Japan Pfd	64.61	67.92	+ 1.24	
Latin Dragons	59.75	62.96	- 0.66	
Nth Amer Gnth	389.00	408.20†	- 1.30	0.40
Oriental Income #	33.43	38.00	- 1.19	5.30
Preference	153.30	160.40	- 0.40	7.40
Tiger	162.00	169.60	- 4.70	
UK Blue Chip	167.70	172.60†	- 1.40	1.30
UK Growth	633.00	673.00	- 7.70	0.80
UK High Yield #	149.30	156.20†	- 0.70	4.40
UK Mid-Cap	306.40	317.10	+ 5.30	1.40
UK Smlr Cos Dis #	91.12	95.41†	- 0.05	9.60
UK Smlr Cos	343.60	361.30	- 1.90	0.78
EDINBURGH UNIT TST MGRS LTD				
0345 090 529				
Commodities #	39.05	35.62†	- 0.05	5.26
Enterprise	124.50	130.00†	- 0.80	1.89
Extra Income #	175.20	183.70†	- 0.70	3.37
European	79.73	82.20†	- 0.27	
Financial	73.73	79.33	+ 0.53	1.28
Growth & Inc #	167.50	190.50	- 1.20	2.24
High Dbl #	224.20	241.00	- 0.10	3.53
International	436.50	463.70	+ 1.90	
Japan Smlr Cos	118.62	127.60†	- 0.90	0.13
Latin American	32.43	35.62	- 0.28	
Nth Cos Cap Gth	106.20	134.70	- 0.40	0.67
Pacific	59.76	62.84	- 0.20	
Prop High Inc	95.43	100.61†	- 0.64	6.41
Tech	155.70	165.30†	- 5.70	
UK Smaller Cos	202.80	215.70	- 0.10	1.23
Japan Sm Cos	54.60	58.00	+ 1.00	
Smlr Cos	222.43	236.60	- 0.20	
UK Inc & Gwth	320.30	331.40	- 0.40	2.28
ELY PLACE UNIT MGMT LTD				
0171 240 0262				
Gilt Government Ord	130.71	139.21	+ 0.15	0.42
Growth Acc	327.54	344.50		0.20
Income	664.21	710.56		0.24
ENDURANCE FUND MGMT LTD				
0171 373 7251				
Endurance Pf	347.70	364.20	- 3.90	2.56
EQUITABLE UNIT TRUST MGRS LTD				
01295 431 480				
Eurotrust	179.13	172.66	+ 1.29	1.38
Equitrust Inc	54.78	57.03	- 0.49	0.07
Far Eastern	203.65	214.37	- 1.15	0.11
High Income	78.29	82.50	- 0.61	2.85
Inc Income Series	47.17	49.70	- 0.52	3.85
Inc Growth	134.66	141.02	- 0.30	1.41
North American	189.46	199.29	- 0.29	1.31
Pacific	170.23	179.27	- 0.92	0.33
Smlr Cos	74.98	82.90†	- 0.73	1.22
Smlr Cos Inc	37.39	39.37	- 0.47	0.36
Far Eastern Inc	208.68	219.84	- 0.14	1.82
EXETER FUND MANAGERS LTD				
01392 412 142				
Capital Growth	46.76	156.23	- 1.68	
Pfd Inc Fds	79.92	81.59†	- 0.56	0.46
High Income #	47.50	49.39†	- 1.28	10.12
UK Smlr Cos	54.13	56.97	- 1.00	
Income	49.19	52.37†	- 0.21	
FAMILY INVESTMENT MGMT LTD				
01273 724 570				
Fam Inc Acc & Cap	120.20	130.00†	- 0.30	2.07
Gilder Income	229.40	239.50	- 2.70	2.51
FIDELITY INVESTMENT SERVS LTD				
Dealing: Private Clients 0800 414 191				
Cash Funds				
Cash Trust	37.10	00.02		6.30
Bond Funds				
Gilt Trust	79.30	37.16†	- 0.50	5.23
Sterling Inc	32.13	32.16†	- 0.09	5.76
Managed Funds				
High Income	77.33	33.73†	- 0.41	4.63
Income Plus	176.53	187.70	+ 0.92	3.11
European Income	54.77	57.72	- 0.76	1.66
Multinational Inc	40.00	40.50		2.32
Equity Funds				
ASEAN	33.66	36.24	+ 0.06	
American	426.73	454.00	+ 2.80	
Amer Spec Sits	222.35	236.60	+ 1.60	
Indian Subcont Cos	7.87	18.98	- 0.73	
European	300.20	319.20	+ 2.70	0.34
European Gtr	113.05	120.10	+ 2.30	0.47
Global Fin	31.11	41.55	- 0.46	0.09
UK Growth	151.77	162.70	- 0.20	1.16
Growth & Inc	223.80	243.10†		2.46
Hi Yield	60.21	64.03	0.01	1.08
Japan Spec Sits	53.33	62.13	+ 1.13	
Japan	153.60	162.70	+ 1.30	
Managed Inc	429.93	455.40	- 1.10	0.53
Manufacturing Pfd	76.71	77.35	+ 0.34	0.34
Recovery	67.23	72.01	- 1.13	1.89
South E Asia	127.75	136.50	- 3.70	1.34
Special Sits	237.50	252.80	- 1.60	1.13
Special Inst				
Cash Accum Units	133.22	133.28	+ 0.12	6.00
FLEMING PRIVATE FUND MGMT LTD				
0171 614 2700				
Balanced #	192.40	197.10	- 4.80	1.62
Fleming Bd Inc #	113.20	113.46	- 0.70	5.64
Cap Prtnrs	164.00	180.40†	+ 0.60	
General Opp	163.40	173.50	- 2.50	1.17
Growth Inc	36.24	39.15	- 0.19	1.13
Pacific Prospects	375.30	397.10	- 17.20	0.74
FOREIGN & COLONIAL UNIT MGT				
Dlg 01277 690 386 Admin/Acc 01277 690 350				
Euro Smlr Cos	78.30	83.20	- 3.00	
High Income	22.42	23.91†	- 0.07	9.45
Japan Smlr Cos	11.63	12.45	+ 0.30	
US Smaller Cos	533.10	569.40	- 2.50	
FRANKLINGTON UNIT MGMT LTD				
Eng: 0171 330 5600 Dealing: 0345 775511				
American Growth	103.90	110.10	- 0.10	
-do- Accum	103.90	110.10	- 0.10	
Amer Smlr Cos	161.00	171.80	- 0.13	
-do- Accum	179.30	828.10	+ 6.23	
Capital Fd	434.20	451.30	+ 1.60	1.25
-do- Accum	631.60	671.90	+ 2.30	1.26
Cont Smlr Cos	68.01	72.34	- 0.32	
-do- Accum	75.98	77.84	- 0.49	
Eurotrust	149.30	158.50†	+ 3.10	5.38
-do- Accum	347.00	369.20†	- 7.30	5.38
Emerging Markets	53.08	56.71†	- 0.42	0.07
-do- Accum	53.53	57.19†	- 0.42	0.07
European	195.63	208.30	+ 3.80	
-do- Accum	209.00	221.40	+ 2.10	
Extra Income	480.30	511.00†	+ 3.70	3.88
-do- Accum	800.70	851.20†	+ 6.20	3.95
Financial	248.20	261.90	- 0.70	0.34
-do- Accum	263.80	280.60	+ 0.90	0.94
Gilt Edged	64.72	66.74	- 0.13	7.04
-do- Accum	106.60	109.90	+ 0.20	7.04
Health Fund Inc	291.90	299.90	+ 1.70	
-do- Accum	291.90	299.90	+ 1.70	
Income & Growth	217.30	244.60	+ 1.60	3.77
-do- Accum	462.60	491.80	+ 2.70	3.77
Intl Growth	452.90	482.40	+ 4.60	
-do- Accum	514.00	546.80	+ 5.40	
Japan & Gen	125.40	133.10	+ 2.70	
-do- Accum	126.20	134.50	+ 2.60	
Monthly Inc #	242.50	258.00†	- 0.50	3.94
-do- Accum #	253.60	269.90†	+ 0.90	3.94
Managed Port Inc	133.20	141.20	+ 2.70	1.37
-do- Accum	147.70	155.50	+ 3.10	1.37
Quarterly Income #	64.56	68.81	- 0.37	5.17
-do- Accum #	70.24	83.42	- 0.45	5.17
Recovery	301.70	322.70†	- 1.00	
-do- Accum	356.20	381.00†	- 1.10	
UK Growth	76.31	81.18	+ 0.04	1.79
-do- Accum	84.32	89.70	+ 0.05	1.79
FRIENDS PROVIDENT UNIT TRUSTS				
Dealing 01732 715835 Eng 01732 715834				
FP American	79.73	84.77	- 0.36	
FP Am Smlr Cos	214.70	229.00	- 2.90	
FP Asian Growth	142.60	152.30	- 2.30	
FP Australian	422.30	451.50	- 5.50	
FP Equity Dist	571.50	609.50	+ 1.50	1.87
-do- Accum	1355.00	1391.00	+ 4.00	1.81
FP Euro Gth	398.00	413.50	+ 0.80	
-do- Accum	425.10	453.40	+ 0.90	
FP Intl Bond	58.12	61.50	- 0.60	3.22
FP Intl Gilt Dist	63.63	66.53	+ 0.41	0.41
-do- Accum	64.53	68.61	+ 0.41	0.41
FP Pac Basin Acc	162.80	173.60	- 0.60	0.79
FP Recovery	73.53	78.43†	+ 0.75	4.13
-do- Accum #	273.80	292.00	+ 3.30	4.13
FP Jap Smlr Cos	173.00	184.50	- 6.70	
FP Monthly Dist #	88.72	94.63†	+ 0.45	4.63
FP Stlg Deposit	100.30	100.30†	+ 0.10	6.35
FP Income	57.20	71.56	+ 1.31	
FP UK Focus	63.47	67.03	+ 0.21	1.71
FP UK Growth	261.80	268.30†	+ 1.00	1.33
-do- Accum	531.60	566.30	+ 2.70	1.33
Stewardship Dist	495.00	526.00	+ 1.70	1.32
-do- Accum	534.10	570.30	+ 2.20	1.32
Sterling Inc Dist #	91.15	96.25	- 0.35	5.36
-do- Accum #	118.30	126.10	+ 0.40	5.30
N Am Stmp Dist	155.00	165.90	+ 0.40	
-do- Accum	167.40	179.50	+ 0.40	
FP Europe Trust				
Intl Ethical In #	131.78	132.30†	+ 1.30	3.65
Intl Ethical Ac #	135.06	135.60	+ 1.40	3.45
FP Managed Portfolio Services				
Capital Gwth Acc	148.00	157.40	+ 3.60	0.59
Open Cap Gth Acc	145.50	154.70	+ 2.80	0.18
Cap Gth Inc Inc #	135.20	143.80	+ 2.40	2.58
Cap Gth Inc Acc #	149.40	155.70	+ 2.60	2.58
Open Cp Gth Ic #	139.40	148.20	+ 2.50	0.18
Opn Cp Gth Ic Ac #	153.00	162.70	+ 1.80	3.50
GA UNIT TRUST MGRS LTD				
0345 696 1867				
GARDA	377.00	395.00	+ 3.70	1.78
Cash	49.89	50.63	- 0.13	5.59
Income Dividends	88.13	90.64	- 0.12	2.24
GA Equity Gth	230.30	300.30	+ 1.30	1.33
GA European Gth	171.20	181.80	+ 0.60	0.07
GA Japan Gth	80.63	85.68	+ 3.10	
GA Mth Amer Gth	299.60	317.90	- 0.50	0.04
GA Intl Gth	138.70	147.50	+ 1.40	
GT GLOBAL FUND MGMT LTD				
Inv 0800 2132274 Dealing 0171 828 9431				
American Smlr Cos	251.40	265.90	+ 4.10	0.12
European Gth	885.20	934.10	+11.30	0.51
Euro Eq & Bd Inc	60.78	64.53	+ 0.08	3.79
-do- Accum	70.95	75.00	- 0.09	3.79
High Yield #	56.04	58.18	+ 0.07	6.91
-do- Accum #	63.54	69.26	+ 0.08	6.91
Income Inc	231.60	248.00	+ 1.16	3.24
-do- Accum	273.70	292.80	+ 0.50	3.58
Intl Growth	410.80	435.10	+ 4.30	0.26
Intl Income	119.70	126.70	+ 0.10	3.01
Japan Growth	387.60	421.20	+ 6.50	
Oriental Inc	122.30	130.40	- 1.10	0.21
UK General Inc	230.50	245.00	+ 0.70	1.58
UK General Acc	423.40	451.50	+ 1.30	1.58
UK Smlr Cos Gth Acc	73.44	77.46	- 0.04	1.50
UK Smlr Cos	125.30	134.00	+ 0.90	1.13
US Growth	238.

هكذا من الإصل

NEWS

Clinton 'cheated with other staff'

■ Monica Lewinsky believed that President Clinton "cheated" on her with four other women — three of whom worked at the White House — it was alleged. *The others were not named.* Fresh reports of exchanges of gifts between Mr Clinton and the young assistant also emerged, including a story that Ms Lewinsky had bought ties for the President ..... **Pages 1, 12, 13, 22, 23**

Insurance scandal could hurt millions

■ The Government is holding emergency talks to sort out the insurance mis-selling scandal which is threatening to engulf up to 7.5 million people who bought policies aimed at protecting them if they lose their jobs. They could lose all means-tested benefits ..... **Pages 1, 64**

Seven die in Alps

At least seven French teenagers were killed in an avalanche during a school hiking expedition in the southern French Alps ..... **Page 1**

Bid to cool Cup fever

The Foreign Office is to try to deter British football fans without tickets from swarming French cities where the English and Scottish teams are due to play ..... **Page 1**

Shootings 'to end'

Ulster's biggest loyalist paramilitary group, said it was ending its killings of Roman Catholics, but within hours Belfast was rocked by another shooting ..... **Page 2**

Diet of the duchess

The duchess of York launches a new career next week as a celebrity cook ..... **Page 3**

Artist strikes lucky

Four landscapes by Rosie Snell, a young artist spurned by art dealers, have been bought by Charles Saatchi ..... **Page 6**

Fall of Young Tories

William Hague has decided to wind up the Young Conservatives, the nursery for a generation of Tory politicians ..... **Page 10**

Iraq stalemate

Iraqi defiance may spell the end of the mission to track down President Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction ..... **Page 14**

Cause for angst

Prejudice clouds British views of Germans, says a German report. The German view of the British is more charitable ..... **Page 16**

Botha unrepentant

Former South African President P. W. Botha, on trial for contempt, said the Afrikaner "tiger" was reawakening ..... **Page 17**

Islanders furious

Jersey residents are apoplectic after Jack Straw ordered an inquiry into financial regulations in the Channel Islands Man ..... **Page 19**

Minister knows a tango or two

■ For a Chelsea football fan, Tony Banks MP is a natural-born mover. When the Minister for Sport declared this week his determination to get ballroom dancing on to the Olympic programme by 2004, *The Times* put him through his paces. **Page 1**

SUNIL MALHOTRA / REUTERS

India's Border Security Force camel regiment stand against a backdrop of the presidential palace during rehearsals for Monday's Republic Day show

NEWS FEATURES

Valerie Grove: It is true that a courtroom is like a theatre, and this week's Royal Courts of Justice productions easily matched the Royal Shakespeare Company's ..... **Page 21**

Paradise lost: Parrots, "jewels of the rainforest", are being wiped out before anything is known about them, writes Nick Nuttall ..... **Page 8**

Street cred: Three months after a curfew was imposed on all children under 16 in Hamilton, Glasgow, there is a growing sense that this is one social experiment that is working ..... **Page 20**

OPINION

In the wings: The Republicans would privately prefer that Mr Clinton served out his term but under the shadow of scandal ..... **Page 23**

Blair's beast: Mr Straw's quiet efficiency shows that he deserves to be at the heart of Government ..... **Page 23**

A novel departure: If you must write about espionage, at least learn its tricks and cover your tracks ..... **Page 23**

LETTERS

New homes in the countryside; Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath ..... **Page 23**

COLUMNS

Simon Jenkins: This is the final article I shall inscribe in "Old High Gothic", an archaic tongue known as MS-Dos. I have arrived at the gates of the god Windows and must learn its tricks ..... **Page 22**

Peter Mandelson: For broadcasters to assert that, apart from broadcasts at elections, they know best, is something we cannot accept ..... **Page 22**

OBITUARIES

Anatoli Boukreev, mountaineer; **Margot Gordon,** squash and tennis champion; **Buddon Orr,** composer ..... **Page 25**

BUSINESS

GDP slows: Growth declined in the last quarter of 1997, leaving the Bank of England facing its toughest decision on interest rates ..... **Page 27**

Flat note: Shares of EMI Group fell 10 per cent after profits are set to fall £25 million ..... **Page 27**

Markets: The FTSE 100 fell to 5,181.4. The pound rose to $1.6662 but fell to DM2.9662. The pound index rose to 104.9 ..... **Page 28**

WEEKEND MONEY

Pensions indexation; corporate bond Peps ..... **Pages 52-64**

SPORT

Football: Rarely has an FA Cup tie caught the imagination of so many as that of Stevenage v Newcastle ..... **Page 33**

Cricket: Nasser Hussain scored 159 as England built up a big score against West Indies A ..... **Page 34**

Tennis: Pete Sampras continued his progress in the Australian Open with victory over Magnus Gustafsson ..... **Page 41**

Golf: Ernie Els held a three-stroke lead after two rounds of the Thailand Open ..... **Page 34**

SECTIONS

the times magazine

Naomi Campbell: Highs and lows of a supermodel ..... **Page 70**

Young Fabians: The It boys and girls of new Labour ..... **Page 24**

Mimi Papandreou: More than a porn star ..... **Page 37**

Fortune cooking: Chinese New Year feast ..... **Page 62**

the times

Interview: Tracey Ullman takes off ..... **Page 6**

Music: The big album by Goldie ..... **Page 10**

Books: Sitar star Ravi Shankar: the best-sellers ..... **Pages 14-21**

Dance: Spanish flyers ..... **Page 22**

Listings: Pages 26-45

WEEKEND

Cornwall 2020: A giant greenhouse ..... **Pages 1,3**

Keith Floyd: Don't tell me when to stop drinking, Mr Blair ..... **Page 2**

Home life: How your face could help you to choose your career ..... **Page 18**

Travel: Hippy trail: self-catering ..... **Pages 23-32**

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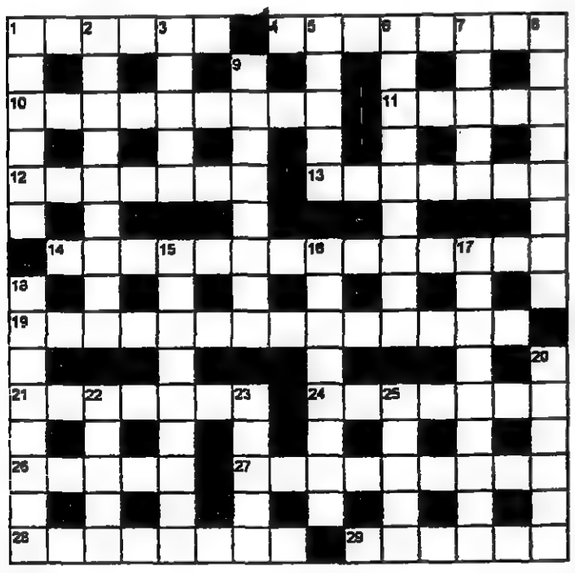
THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,697

A £20 book token will be awarded to the senders of the first five correct solutions opened next Thursday. Entries should be addressed to: The Times, Saturday Crossword Competition, PO Box 486, Virginia Street, London E1 9DD. The names of the winners and the solution will be published next Saturday.

Name/Address .....



ACROSS

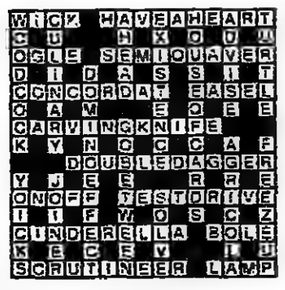
1 Run in a straight line (6).
4 Continental community still over the moon (8).
10 Fat cat apt to curl in a strange way (9).
11 Some meat enjoyed like this? (5).
12 Leftover old insecticide overcomes people (7).
13 Followers always holding one back (7).
14 Try something desperate — as greedy suckers do? (6,2,6).
19 Sexy beauty with part to play in historical record (6,8).
21 Having completed short time in firm (7).
24 Catch unknown creature — a parrot (7).
26 Liquor is found inside part of supermarket (5).
27 In bad-tempered case, I am willing to appear as witness (9).
28 Choke — one of car's controls (8).
29 Soldier discovering fish by a river (6).

DOWN

1 Heartlessly pay dole in new way — spread out (6).
2 Song sequence about love put off (9).
3 Clubs get beaten in the end (5).
5 React violently to pander (5).
6 Country's temperature the man reports (3,6).
7 Bird — an enormous creature (5).
8 Talk? Just the opposite (8).
9 Fancy needlework covering tail of shirt (8).
15 Aggressive exchange you reported fast (9).
16 Actors of limited range may be of two sorts (8).
17 Wicked actor somehow promises to settle scores (9).
18 Steal Jack's territory (8).
20 The old leading man comes around — he shows persistence (6).
22 One gets up part of flight (5).
23 Enable old husband to get put up in accommodation (5).
25 Soldier, without fuel, sent North on horse (5).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,691

Solution to Puzzle No 20,696



LAST WEEK'S WINNERS: *D G Page, Orpington, Kent; John Whitwick, Headington, Oxford. D Daniels, Atherstone, Warwickshire. E A Simmons, Waterlooville, Hampshire. R Rayfield, West Alderbury Park, Oxfordshire.*

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HOURS OF DARKNESS

TODAY

Sun rises: 7.51 am — Sun sets: 4.30 pm

Moon sets: 1.17 pm — Moon rises: 4.04 am

New moon January 28

London 4.56 pm to 7.49 am
Bristol 4.45 pm to 7.29 am
Edinburgh 4.39 pm to 7.20 am
Manchester 4.36 pm to 7.16 am
Penzance 5.00 pm to 7.36 am

TOMORROW

Sun rises: 7.50 am — Sun sets: 4.31 pm

Moon sets: 2.05 pm — Moon rises: 5.06 am

New moon January 28

London 4.57 pm to 7.48 am
Bristol 4.47 pm to 7.31 am
Edinburgh 4.41 pm to 7.23 am
Manchester 4.38 pm to 7.19 am
Penzance 5.01 pm to 7.38 am

HIGH TIDES

TODAY	AM	HT	PM	HT
Aberdeen	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Avonmouth	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	7.6
Bristol	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	10.0
Cardiff	[illegible]	7.5	[illegible]	7.9
Devonport	[illegible]	4.5	[illegible]	4.5
Dover	[illegible]	5.4	[illegible]	5.5
Dublin	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	3.5
Falmouth	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	4.2
Glasgow	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	2.8
Harwich	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	3.3
Holyhead	[illegible]	4.6	[illegible]	6.7
Hull (River Ent)	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	7.4
Immingham	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	7.3
King's Lynn (Lynn)	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Leith	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Liverpool	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	7.7
London Bridge	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	6.1
Lowestoft	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	2.2
Margate	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Milford Haven	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	7.4
Newlyn	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	5.5
Oban	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	3.2
Penzance	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	4.5
Portland	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Portsmouth	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	3.9
Shoreham	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Southampton	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	4.5
Swansea	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Tees	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	6.5
Walton On Naze	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	3.5

(Times are British Summer Time. Heights are in metres.)

HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday: Highest day temp: Orkney 9C (48F). Lowest day max: Braemar [illegible]. Highest rainfall: Stornoway [illegible]. Highest sunshine: Jersey [illegible].

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FORECAST

☐ **General:** Any early rain or sleet in southern England will soon clear, and then most areas will have a dry day with spells of sunshine, the best of them in the west. Along eastern coasts of Scotland and England the cloud may thicken at times to limit the sunshine and give a light flurry of snow.

Tonight, most areas will be very cold and frosty.

☐ **London, SE, Cent S, SW England, Channel Isles, S Wales:** Rather cloudy at first with icy patches and the odd sleet or snow flurry. Brighter skies spreading from the northeast later. Fresh northeast wind. Max 6C (43F).

☐ **E Anglia, Midlands, N Wales, NW England, Lakes, IoM:** Cold. Mostly dry and bright with good sunny spells, especially in the west. Moderate northeast breeze. Max 6C (43F).

☐ **E, Central N, NE England:** Cold and cloudy with some wintry flurries, but a few bright spells inland. Raw northeast wind. Max 5C (41F).

☐ **Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee, Aberdeen, Moray Firth, NE Scotland, Orkney, Shetland:** Cold and cloudy near coast; drier and much brighter inland with sunny spells. Moderate easterly breeze. Max 5C (41F).

☐ **SW, NW Scotland, Glasgow, Cent Highlands, Argyll:** Mostly dry with sunny spells. Cold and frosty early and late. Light easterly breeze. Max 5C (41F).

☐ **N Ireland:** Cloudy in south at first with drizzle and sleet; drier, brighter weather will spread from the north. Cold easterly breeze. Max 7C (45F).

☐ **Republic of Ireland:** Mostly dry with sunny periods. Moderate northeasterly wind. Max 6C (43F).

☐ **Outlook:** Dry with sunny spells in most areas. Chilly days with overnight frost. Rain will move into Scotland later on Monday.

AROUND BRITAIN

24 hrs to 5 pm. b=bright; c=cloud; d=drizzle; ds=dust storm; du=dull; f=fair; fg=fog; g=gale; h=hail; r=rain; sh=shower; sl=sleet; sn=snow; s=sun; t=thunder

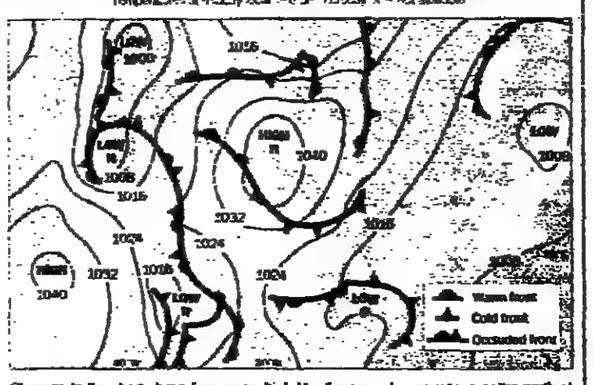
	Sun hrs	Rain in	Max C	Max F	
Aberdeen	X				
Anglesey	-	0.06	9	48	c
Aspatria	-	0.23	11	52	r
Aviemore	-	0.03	9	48	r
Belfast	-	0.01	11	52	c
Birmingham	-	0.01	5	41	d
Bognor R	-	-	6	43	c
Bournem'th	-	0.01	7	45	c
Bristol	-	0.01	5	41	du
Buxton	-	0.04	5	41	fg
Cardiff	-	0.01	7	45	c
Clacton	0.5	-	5	41	c
Clevthorpes	-	0.01	5	41	sh
Colwyn Bay	X				
Cromer	-	-	4	39	c
Eastbourne	-	-	4	39	c
Edinburgh	-	0.01	11	52	r
Eskdalemuir	-	0.30	8	46	r
Exmouth	-	0.03	7	45	c
Falmouth	-	0.04	11	52	c
Fishguard	-	0.01	8	46	c
Folkestone	3.6	-	3	37	c
Glasgow	-	0.01	11	52	c
Guernsey	4.8	-	7	45	c
Hastings	-	-	4	39	c
Hayling I	-	-	7	45	c
Herne Bay	2.9	-	3	37	c
Hove	0.9	-	6	43	du
Hunstanton	X	-	5	41	b
Isle-of-man	-	0.27	9	48	r
Isle-of-wight	-	-	7	45	c
Jersey	8.3	-	5	41	s
Kinloss	-	0.01	12	54	r
Leeds	-	0.14	7	45	r
Lerwick	-	0.25	9	48	r
Leuchars	-	0.01	10	50	r
Littlehmptn	0.1	-	5	41	du
London	-	-	7	45	c
Lowestoft	-	-	3	37	c
Manchester	-	0.02	7	45	r
Margate	X				
Minehead	X				
Morecambe	-	0.24	7	45	r
Newcastle	-	0.13	8	46	r
Newquay	0.3	0.03	9	48	c
Norwich	-	-	4	39	c
Oxford	-	0.01	6	43	s
Penzance	X	0.05	10	50	c
Poole	-	0.03	8	46	c
Prestatyn	X	0.15	9	48	c
Ross-o-wye	X	0.01	7	45	du
Salcombe	X				
Saunton Sand	-	0.01	8	46	du
Scarboro'	-	0.15	5	41	sh
Shrewsbury	-	0.01	7	45	du
Skegness	0.3	-	5	41	c
Southend	X				
Southport	-	0.06	7	45	d
Southsea	-	-	8	46	du
Stornoway	-	0.63	10	50	r
Swanage	-	0.01	7	45	c
Teignmouth	-	0.03	9	48	c
Tenby	-	0.11	9	48	r
Tiree	-	0.52	10	50	r
Torquay	-	0.02	8	46	c
Tynemouth	-	0.13	7	45	sh
West-s-mare	-	0.04	7	45	du
Weymouth	X				

These are Thursday's figures.

ABROAD

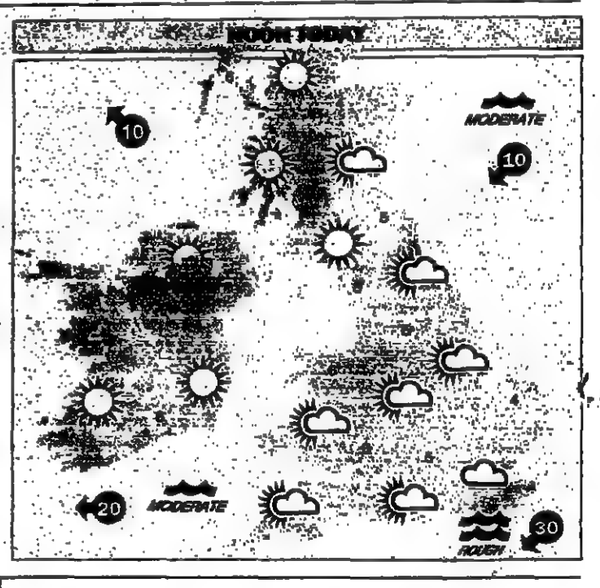
	C	F	
Ajaccio	12	54	s
Akrotiri	18	64	f
Alex'dria	23	73	s
Algiers	15	59	s
Amst'dm	5	32	s
Athens	14	57	f
B Aires	24	75	s
Bahrain	17	63	f
Bangkok	30	86	f
Barbados	29	84	c
Barcelona	9	48	s
Beijing	0	32	s
Beirut	18	64	f
Belgrade	6	43	c
Berlin	3	37	c
Bermuda	17	63	c
Biarritz	5	41	s
Berlin'e	3	37	s
Brussels	1	34	f
Budapest	5	41	f
Cairo	21	70	s
Cape Tn	25	77	s
Ch'church	X		
Chicago	-1	30	sn
Cologne	2	36	s
Corfu	9	48	f
C'phagn	3	37	s
Dublin	11	52	s
Dubrovnik	12	54	f
Faro	17	63	s
Florence	9	48	f
Frankfurt	1	34	s
Funchal	17	63	s
Geneva	0	32	s
Gibraltar	16	61	s
Helsinki	0	32	s
Hong K	17	63	s
Innsbruck	2	36	s
Istanbul	12	54	f
Jeddah	27	81	f
Jo'burg	27	81	f
L Angeles	15	59	s
L Palmas	21	70	s
Le Touquet	1	34	s
Lisbon	15	59	s
Locarno	7	45	s
Luxembg	0	32	f
Luxor	23	73	s
Madrid	10	50	s
Majorca	14	57	s
Malaga	16	61	s
Malta	13	55	f
Melb'rne	33	91	s
Mexico C	19	66	s
Miami	25	77	s
Milan	10	50	c
Montreal	-5	23	s
Moscow	-6	21	c
Munich	-1	30	sn
N Delhi	16	61	s
N York	1	34	s
Nairobi	25	77	f
Naples	12	54	f
Nice	15	59	s
Oslo	0	32	s
Paris	2	36	s
Perth	23	73	s
Prague	-1	30	c
Reykjavik	-6	21	sn
Rhodes	17	63	s
Rio de J	34	93	f
Riyadh	15	59	s
Rome	11	52	s
S Frisco	9	48	s
S Paulo	X		
Salzburg	-2	28	sn
Santiago	30	86	s
Seoul	3	37	s
Sing'pore	32	90	f
Stockholm	-1	30	f
Strasb'rg	1	34	c
Sydney	25	77	s
Tangier	18	64	s
Tel Aviv	21	70	s
Tenerife	21	70	c
Tokyo	10	50	s
Toronto	-9	16	c
Tunis	11	52	s
Valencia	14	57	s
Vanc'ver	7	45	c
Venice	9	48	f
Vienna	1	34	sn
Warsaw	-1	30	c
Wash'ton	5	41	c
Wel'ngton	17	63	
Zurich	-1	30	c

Temperatures at midday local time on Thursday. X = not available



Changes to the chart above from noon: high H will remain slow-moving over the north of Scotland. Low R will remain slow-moving in mid-Atlantic. Low D will remain slow-moving over Iberia.

MOON TODAY



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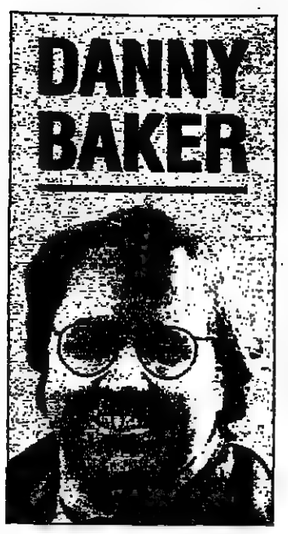
هكذا من الإصل

FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Spits and spats as the worms turn

DANNY BAKER



The outcry and subsequent transfer-listing of Savo Milosevic after his spit in the direction of a troublesome claque of travelling Aston Villa fans last week strike me as very cowardly reactions. They smack of panic and guile.

First, where is the victim here? Not the supporters. They stand through the match, neck veins bulging, heaping torrential and vicious invective upon some poor old wretch who is having a stinker in the sure knowledge that said wretch is no more allowed to answer back than the sentries in St James' Palace.

Apparently, at Villa, at some point during the campaign, reason slipped its moorings and the screeching gaggle of fevered fanatics started to believe that their victim was no longer suffering because of his code of dogged professionalism but because he was a fool who inhabits some other world that would never collide with their own. They were immune.

In these circumstances, a shot across their bows from a well-funnelled tongue can be seen as both sensible and liberating, an admittedly distasteful but nevertheless necessary piece of gunboat diplomacy that might quickly serve to re-establish that, while football is real, people are realer.

To be fair, the majority of football supporters acknowledge this and do not bellyache whenever the worm turns. Terrace dwellers know that a well-seasoned heckler can quite skilfully take a player's sensitivities and emotions to the very brink several times during a match before recognising the flash of red that signals an athlete is about to become a human being again and set about them with his fists. If somebody occasionally gets it wrong and receives a right-hander, then it is their own fault.

We are not wrestling fans. Those men out there are not actors. They are drawn from our own ranks. That is why the masses were so sanguine when Eric Cantona's famous kung-fu lunge had the tabloids typically misjudging the moment and screaming for his head.

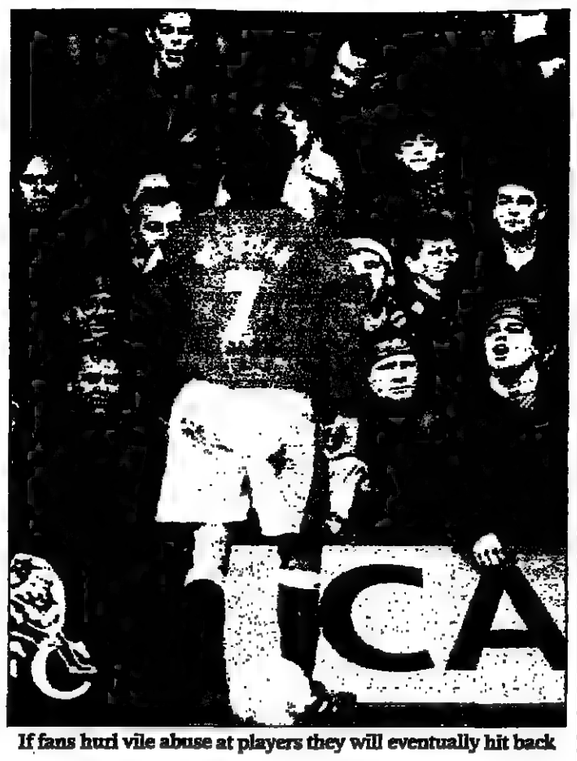
Nobody I know blamed Eric. The overwhelming reaction from the public was one of disgust at the bleating from the dreary, goading little "victim" with the big mouth. He had seemingly never been to a match before and had learnt all he knew about football from *Loaded* magazine. Still, one of the funniest and most satisfying images of recent years was the look on his face as Eric sailed through the air toward him. This poor, gormless sap, possibly only used to watching action on videotape, suddenly found reality not only to be virtual but physical and, what was more, it was seizing the initiative.

Naturally, some view these rare explosive incidents with horror, but more horrible still is the widening chasm that is hourly opening up between fans and the game that their money bankrolls, with clubs retreating into patronising corporate control and paranoia, and players leaning less toward the Bill Shankly and ever more toward Barbra Streisand. But football still, despite its vulgar obsession with money, remains a plug-ugly pastime overwhemingly played and watched by the working class. The denial of this leads it to drift ever more into a world of What Should Be instead of What Is. Of course supporters scream vile insults and of course players spit back. There you have it.

That night with Cantona at Selhurst Park I believed would herald a new age in relationships between performer and public. Dialogue would be urgent and vital, contact, though random and guerrilla in its nature, would be meaningful and free from hypocrisy and interference. However, bourgeois agencies, after the usual display of outrage that baffled their customers, continued on their dread plan of guiding the game into a specious New Age of Light. Eric, declared mad, later ridiculed, returned to football broken, exhausted and disinherited, his spirit all but extinguished.

We have toiled beneath the sickening heavy yoke of the false doctrine that is "New Football, Happy Footballers" ever since. Many were beginning to feel all was lost. But, in recent actions such as Ian Wright's window-ledge harangue, Gordon Strachan's Open War On Referees and, most glorious of all, Milosevic's airstrike upon his critics, things are starting to move again at grass-roots. The Man, as hippies dubbed The System, must start to watch his back. Let the shining spit of an unshackled Yugoslav lead the way.

☐ **Danny Baker is on Talk Radio (1053-1089am) every Saturday from 5.30pm.**



If fans hurl vile abuse at players they will eventually hit back

Glittering prize eludes Banks

Tony Banks, the bumptious, bouncing, clumsy Minister For Sport And That, throws everyone a curve-ball this week by making embarrassing announcements calling for ballroom dancing to be legalised. No, hang on legitimised. Whatever. Tony feels that not only should ballroom dancing be upgraded to a sport but there must be some kind of march through London's West End if the World Sporting Council does not stop drawing off syringe-fulls of blood and urine from glassy-eyed Chinese girls and knuckle down to the real business of giving Olympic medals for the wahtutsi.

Say what you like about General Pinochet and his disgusting junta, but it is a matter of record that, quite early in his regime, he outlawed any action that involved the donning of make-up to be classified as a sport and, I'm afraid, I'm right there with the repressive far-right on this one.

Understand, it is not that ice skating, synchronised swimming and that insane gymnastic thing where children tumble around with ribbons and balls don't have their place. It's just that that place is underneath a big stripey tent on the local heath and not panicking innocent browsers of legitimate sports channels. As for ballroom dancing, it too should stay where it belongs; either as a slapstick set-piece in George Formby films or as a melancholy TV outpost creating lacklustre inspiration for the few incurable masturbators who have no access to the Internet.

It has been mooted that Tony was pulling the nation's laddish leg. I doubt that very much. You see, 15 years ago I was fronting a short colour piece for LWT about the unlikely spectacle of the Greater London Council's Christmas pantomime, *Ken Whittington And His Cat*. I am not making this up.

It had several impressive musical set-pieces, one of which required Ken, Tony Banks and, I think, Diane Abbott, to sing a Gary Glitter number while dressed in costumes part stock-medieval, part OTT-Glamrock. It became absolutely transparent, though, even during first rehearsal, that Tony felt the entire seasonal offering was rather putting his reputation, such as it was then, in the old firing line. Everyone else was donning the slap and camping it up royally but Tony, his brow wrinkled, his eyes darting, plainly didn't get it.

Between run-throughs, he gave me a short, nervous interview in which I put it to him that he was not perhaps as "up for it" as other high profiles within the Council. Tony assured me that it was merely the intense pressures of office and the heavy burden of Thatcher's Britain that temporarily weighed him down. Tights, red wigs and Bacofoil breastplates did not enter into it.

I have never looked at Banks since then without uttering those words out loud, for that night, when the sole performance of *Ken Whittington and His Cat* was brought before a packed house, the GLC company found itself a man short, a voice wanting. And, though apologies were made and conflicting excuses proffered, the fact that the Gary Glitter song was presented as a thin duet rather than a lusty trio spoke volumes.

It hardly mattered. The show was a triumph. So, how ironic then, how delicious, that many years later Banks, one of the lads and desperately keen to get the populist nod, walked out in front of another full house, this time Wembley, and was booed and jeered like some worm-eaten turn at the Hippodrome. Right then it must've occurred to the old errant member of the Glitter Band that there was indeed another business just like show business. Draggy old politics. And, as we learnt this week, that isn't even as popular as *Come Dancing*.

Sound idea for Old Trafford

Splendid news as I learn that, at Old Trafford, the executive boxes are equipped with volume controls that can blot out the noise from the stadium altogether. A number of friends of mine are offended, citing this as absolute proof of the arrogance of the corporate "supporter" and their paralysing fear of real fans. I think it the single most exciting recent addition to a ground.

Imagine! You are a small club drawn against United in the Cup so you get together with a few pals and somehow rent a box. From the start, United are all over you. They hit the bar five times. They hit the post ten times. The referee denies them three clear penalties. Then he sends off Gary Pallister for a perfectly harmless tackle. You are terrible. They are superb. Five minutes from time, one of your most clumsy defenders mis-hits a clearance and it balloons crazily upfield, bounces barmily over Schmeichel and bibble-bobbles towards the net.

Just before the ball skids across the line, Schmeichel, throwing himself full-length, gets the merest touch to deflect it away for a corner. However, the linesman is way behind play and gives the goal anyway!

Long aware of your alien scarf in one of their best boxes, the entire crowd turns towards you howling at the rank injustice of it all. They are incensed. They are insane. Every face in Old Trafford a twisted mask of hate, directing torrents of anger and pain toward the large window behind which you sit.

It is at this point that you stand and, with exaggerated gentility, begin to adjust the knob on the wall. You then spend the remainder of the match parading up and down behind the glass with one hand on your hip and the other cupped around your ear, giving a performance worthy of a pantomime villain. "What?", you mouth in mock concern. "Can't hear you. Speak up. No, SPEEAAAK UP! Volume control, see? VOL-UME CON-TROL! DOWN! CAN'T HEAR! DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SAY-ING!"

Lastly, and here I'm suggesting a crucial addition to the executive experience, you spread your arms wide and pull the heavy patterned curtains across. Game, set and match.

Knives are out for the turnstile patrol

Last week's piece about the ludicrous and petty items that have been taken off supporters on their way into matches prompts Jerry Moore to write to tell of another side of the experience. Jerry works as a chef and, on finishing a shift in a hotel one night, had exactly half-an-hour to make it into town in order to be in position at Elland Road for Leeds United's 7.45 kick-off against Arsenal. In the event he makes it with ten minutes to spare, which he will need.

The queues are long and the police are searching everybody on the way in. With just three minutes to kick-off, Jerry finds himself two people from the front. It is then he remembers what he has in his right hand. Twelve stainless steel kitchen knives of varying length wrapped in a soft leather roll case.

Now, he is one person from the front. His only option is to get out of the line and go home. This he is still wrestling with when he is eyeball to eyeball with a helmeted constable.

"Could you put your arms above your arms above your head sir?" asks the constable, and this Jerry does, holding the offending leather-bound cache high in the air while he is dutifully patted down. "In you go chum," says the cop and, as if in a dream, Jerry floats exhausted with relief to his regular seat in the stands. He doesn't remember much of the game, he says, because he was convinced that at any moment a riot would break out and, in the ensuing mêlée and it's aftermath, he would be exposed as some kind of Thug Mastermind. The Leeds Arms Connection. The Butcher of Elland Road. Meanwhile, of course, back at the turnstiles, nine-year-old boys were being relieved of their Opal Fruits.

Dichio leaving Italy to join Sunderland

SUNDERLAND have signed Daniele Dichio, the former Queens Park Rangers forward, from Sampdoria for a fee of £750,000. Dichio, 23, is expected to complete his return from Italy early next week (Russell Kempson writes).

Peter Reid, the Sunderland manager, had a £2 million offer turned down by Queens Park Rangers last season and missed out again during the summer, when the forward joined Sampdoria on a free transfer.

After failing to settle with his new club, Dichio has *spent the past month on loan* with Lecce, the struggling Serie A side.

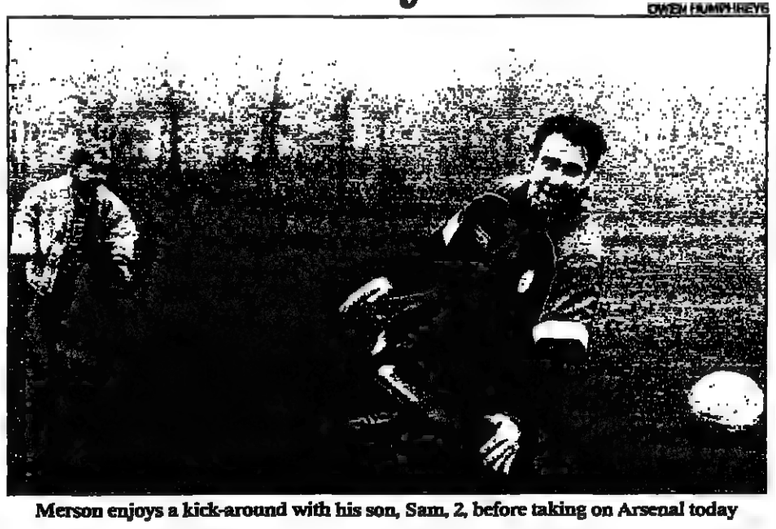
Oxford United have appointed Malcolm Shotton, a former player at the Manor Ground, as their new manager. Shotton, 40, replaces Malcolm Crosby, who stepped down on Monday after only five matches in charge. Oxford have agreed nominal compensation with Barnsley, for whom Shotton worked as *manager of the reserve team.*

Steve Claridge, 31, the Leicester City striker, has joined Portsmouth on a month's loan.

Merson unscarred by 'madness'

David Maddock *meets a player making the most of another chance*

OWEN HUMPHREYS



Merson enjoys a kick-around with his son, Sam, 2, before taking on Arsenal today

It comes as a surprise when you meet Paul Merson in the flesh. After all he has been through in recent years — the drugs, the drink, the gambling, his wife walking out on him — you expect him *to look worn down by it all.*

He doesn't. His face has a surprising innocence, apparently untouched by the "madness", as he calls it, that engulfed him a few years ago. There is a simplicity in his features, as if he enjoys every single second of his life.

It is, he says, a reflection of the stability he has finally found with Middlesbrough. "It's a buzz for me here, and I wouldn't swap it for any other club," he said. "*I think things* had become stale for me at Arsenal, after what happened, and I needed a change."

Merson has had a few reminders of "what happened" to him over the past week. Today, Middlesbrough entertain Arsenal in the fourth round of the FA Cup, and his relationship with his former club has, naturally enough, come under intense scrutiny.

Many supporters at Highbury believe *that Merson* should not have been sold, even allowing for his addic*tions. He has since impressed* Glenn Hoddle sufficiently to be included in the past three England squads.

So, how did the move come about? "Arsène Wenger told me he would be playing 4-4-2 this season, and it would be a problem fitting me into the team," he explained. "In a way, he did me a favour letting me go, because I have found a new lease of life here."

Yet Merson still speaks as if *Arsenal is in his heart, still* meets up with his old teammates and still needs the contact *with his roots in* London.

At the start of the season, he found the 600-mile round-trip hard and considered giving up. But now he has taken possession of Fabrizio Ravanelli's old house and his family stays up in Middlesbrough almost as much as he goes home to London.

He has patched up his problems with Lorraine, his wife, and this week his sons, *Charlie and Sam, have been* staying in the North East with him. "They got me through it all, and they come before everything," he said.

Now, the greatest problem in Merson's life is trying to beat his old mates. There will be no divided loyalties, even though he will receive an award today from the Arsenal supporters. "The fans knew Arsenal didn't want to keep me and they knew I never asked to leave," he said. "They know I will want to beat them because I'm a professional *doing a job.*"

FA responds to Conference call

BY WALTER GAMMIE

STEVENAGE Borough will be denied one of the traditional perks bestowed on non-League clubs as reward for outstanding FA Cup runs after a shake-up of the qualifying *rounds of the competition was* announced yesterday.

From next season, all 22 Vauxhall Conference clubs will enter the Cup in the third qualifying round. Exemptions to the first round proper given to the clubs with the best Cup runs from the previous season, and those that appear in the FA Umbro Trophy final, have been swept away. The 66 clubs from the premier divisions of the three feeder leagues to the Conference — the UniBond League, Ryman League and Dr Martens League — will enter the competition in the second qualifying round.

This does away with the position this season where ten of the Vauxhall Conference clubs came into the Cup in the first qualifying round, nine in the fourth qualifying round and Stevenage, Hednesford Town and Woking in the first round proper. Steve Clark, the FA competitions secretary, said: "We feel that the clubs' entry to the Cup should reflect where they are in the leagues, just as it does in entry to the first and third rounds, and not the clubs' ability in other competitions such as the Trophy.

"Take the case of Chesterfield, from the second division. They reached the semi-finals last year but still started in the first round this season. The same principle will apply to clubs throughout the Cup."

The Conference has long pressed for a standard entry for their clubs. "It is recognition of our status," Peter Hunter, the chief executive, said. "From an administrative and fixture point of view it gives us two extra Saturdays and two midweeks free."

Clark said that 36 regional groupings, into which the Cup has been drawn up to the third qualifying round, will be done away with. The preliminary and first qualifying round draws are expected to be done as one, with further draws to follow for each round. Clark admits, however, that he has yet to work out the fine detail.

He said the FA will also initiate a review of the facilities required by clubs to enter a competition whose appeal shows no sign of waning.

IN THE TIMES ON MONDAY

Unparalleled coverage of the FA Cup: Rob Hughes on the match of the round at Stevenage, Lynne Truss at Villa Park and reports on all the weekend's ties

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FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Nothing can surpass the mother of all football competitions

Crawford scores the winner for Colchester United, of the fourth division, against Leeds United at Layer Road in 1971. Photograph: Anglia Press

Romance not dead in only cup to cheer

BRIAN GLANVILLE

No wonder Newcastle United appear to be shaking in their shoes at the prospect of playing Stevenage Borough on their own little ground in the fourth round of the FA Cup tomorrow. For, as far as giant-killers are concerned, Newcastle United have somewhat depressing form.

Although winners of the Cup three times in the 1950s, Newcastle were thrashed by Liverpool in the 1974 final, and have had some embarrassing Cup defeats over the years.

Everybody remembers their demise at non-League Hereford United in that 1972 replay. Few seem to recall that, in the third round of 1964, Newcastle — then, it is true, a second-division club — went out 2-1 at home to Bedford Town of the Southern League.

Hereford had held Newcastle to a 2-2 draw at St James' Park, then, after the replay had been postponed several times, beat them 2-1. The right-footed goal driven in by Radford from outside the penalty box is still replayed, although it was not the winner.

The FA Cup is the mother of all competitions. Established in 1872, at the instigation of Charles Alcock, the Old Harrovian FA secretary, it was based on Harrow's so-called Cock House competition. Which made it all the more ironic that, last season, the erratic decisions of David Elleray, the referee who is a housemaster at Harrow, should have robbed Chesterfield of a romantic semi-final win over Middlesbrough.

Romance, after all, is the essence of the FA Cup, giant-killing almost its *raison d'être*. Mighty Arsenal, crashing to third-division Walsall in 1933, the amateur Corinthians beating Blackburn Rovers 1-0 at the Crystal Palace in 1924.

Then there was fourth-division Colchester United beating Leeds United at Layer Road in 1971 — 3-2, after going three goals ahead. How Leeds missed Billy Bremner that day. How Jackie Charlton struggled against Ray Crawford, scorer of two goals.

In 1949, Colchester, then a Southern League club, knocked out Huddersfield Town, then of the first division. That was also the year when Alec Stock, a former tank captain, plotted the demise of Sunderland on Yeovil Town's notorious slope.

Arsenal's defeat at Walsall has rung down the years, though that was a patched-up Arsenal side. With the indomitable Jack Lambert injured, one Charlie Walsh was given his chance at centre forward. He assured Herbert Chapman, the Gunners' legendary manager, that he was raring to go. Chapman told him he had better change out of his day socks and suspenders, or the crowd would laugh at him.

Cliff Bastin claimed that Herbie Roberts, the Arsenal centre half, was headed near the eye, Norman Sidey, the reserve left half, kicked on the knee, Tommy Black, the reserve left back, who gave away a crucial penalty, was promptly sold by Chapman to Plymouth Argyle. No Arsène Wenger tolerance in those days.

The FA Cup led to the formation of the Football League, when a professional team found their fixture list was inadequate. But the championship, as it grinds through the season, can never engender the drama and excitement of the Cup, with its marvellous capacity for surprise.

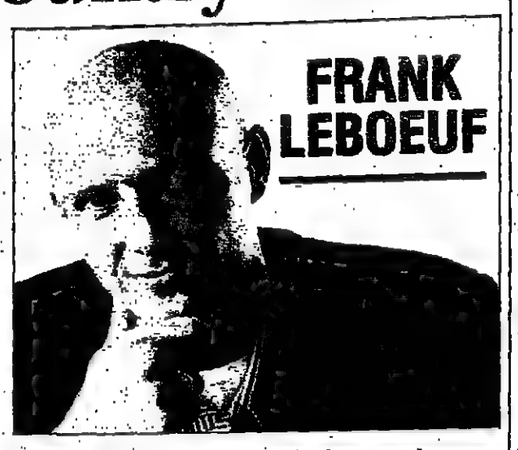
Curiously, cup play has never caught on in Italy, though you might have expected it to be popular. It has status in France, a fair amount in Spain but in Germany you can never be sure that the big clubs have taken it seriously.

Sir Stanley Rous, FA secretary and a progenitor of the European Cup Winners' Cup, hoped it would inspire greater interest among European countries in their native cup tournaments. This, to some extent, it has done, though now, with the enlargement of the European Cup Champions' League, it has lost much of its allure.

Alan Hardaker, when Football League secretary, did his best to undermine the FA Cup with the Football League Cup. This, as he loaded it with inducements — the final at Wembley, a quite illogical Uefa Cup place for the winners — more and more resembled an ugly daughter, given a huge dowry by a rich father. But, though the League Cup has to some extent caught on, it has never touched the FA Cup in terms of prestige. When does the League Cup ever see a Stevenage?

Chelsea inevitably suffer when club and country clash

FRANK LEBOEUF



In French, the expression is *le cul entre deux chaises*. In English, that means caught between two stools and, in any language, it sums up my predicament this week.

Expected and excited to be playing against Arsenal in the Coca-Cola Cup semi-final first leg next Wednesday, those plans were thrown into turmoil when I was called up for the France squad to play against Spain on the same night. I know I am not the first player to be caught up in a club versus country clash and I will not be the last, but that does not make it any easier on anyone involved.

The bottom line, I suppose, is that it is not a dilemma at all. Aimé Jacquet, the France coach, is entitled to call me into the squad and international rules state that there is a minimum number of matches every season when he is guaranteed a player's services. I have not reached that figure, so the simple fact is that I go with France.

To be honest, I think that would have been my decision anyway, however tough that is on Chelsea. I know the club pay my wages and they have a right to expect that I give everything for them. Footballers are well paid these days and clubs rightly want a return. The chances are, though, that Chelsea would never have signed me in the first place unless I was an international, and they know that if I play well for them there is always a chance that these problems will crop up.

I know Ruud Gullit recently spoke about his frustration at players disappearing on international duty and it is likely to get worse as the World Cup approaches. It must feel to him that the club is being punished for its success. You work hard to get to semi-finals and achieve things. But the better you get your players to perform, the more likely it is that they will become internationals and it all works against you in situations like Wednesday.

It is hard to see any solution unless the authorities in this country cut the number of matches. I understand Uefa are trying to put pressure on the Premier League to reduce the number of clubs from 20 to 18 in line with the rest of Europe and problems like this only add strength to their argument.

I wish my team-mates all the best in my absence. The Uefa Cup incentive may yet return for the Coca-Cola Cup so I'm sure they will be going out to win. And, hopefully, when I return for the second leg, we will already be on course for Wembley.

■ First impressions

Which leads me conveniently to another national stadium, the Stade de France, which will be officially opened next week when we meet Spain. It will be a very big night for our country, with an 80,000 capacity crowd, and I am excited about the chance to play there — imagine how an Englishman would feel if he was among the first to appear at Wembley.

The futuristic ground, which will of course host the World Cup final on July 12, is not the only reason that this is an important test for France. When I spoke to Jacquet, he stressed that he has only five or six more games to prepare for the summer, and with Spain undoubtedly one of the countries with a chance of winning the tournament, this fixture will provide a barometer of how we are doing. The French public will have high expectations.

> 'It is hard to see a solution unless the authorities cut the number of matches'

Given that situation, there was no way I could ever afford to turn down France and play for Chelsea. Appearing in the World Cup in my home country would be a very special moment and I do not want to do anything to jeopardise that.

I do not know whether I will be in the team. Laurent Blanc, from Marseilles, and Marcel Desailly, who plays for AC Milan, have been first choice for most of the time, but I shall keep plugging away.

■ Title hopes recede

While I have been in France this week on family business, the Chelsea team have been in Portugal for a week's break because we have no game today. I think the team are feeling a little mentally tired and it showed in our recent defeat to Everton.

I do not mean to sound defeatist, but perhaps the way we lost that game was a sign that we have not quite got it in us to win the championship — at least not yet. Before Chelsea fans think I am throwing in the towel, let me stress that we will be going out to win every game and praying for Manchester United to slip up again, as they did at Southampton.

All I am doing is echoing Ruud's recent comments that the club is still growing and the number of games we have lost this season indicates that we have a few more steps to climb. We seem to have trouble holding results together. We played quite well in the first half against Everton and took the lead. I am fairly certain that United would not have lost from 1-0 up. We need that same resolve and, believe me, we are working on it.

■ Model professional

Readers of my last column will remember a little discussion about my appearance. Well, it is about to have the ultimate test on the catwalks of Paris. I am about to make my debut as a male model.

A friend of mine, Oswald Boateng, is one of the best up-and-coming designers and has asked me to parade some of his suits while I am in France. He is part of a thriving set of English designers. It is the big fashion week in Paris after the recent displays in Milan, so it will be an exciting time. Any debut is nerve-racking and I have a feeling that this will be as frightening as any I have made in my football career.

FA CUP FOURTH-ROUND PREVIEWS

ASTON VILLA v WEST BROMWICH ALBION
Today, 1.0

Peter Robinson

If he had any news sense at all, then Brian Little, the Aston Villa manager, would write Savo Milosevic's name at the top of his team-sheet today and then worry about everything else. Every journalist and broadcaster in the land would do the same. Brian, honest, go on, do it. Otherwise, common sense will prevail and Milosevic, after his alleged spit at Villa supporters last week, will spend the day at home with his feet up.

Still, it is an ill wind that blows nobody any good and within weeks of complaining that he can barely get a game, Julian Joachim should get his chance. Southgate returns to central defence after injury, probably in place of Scimeca, who has a hamstring strain.

For West Bromwich Albion, Hughes, a winger, may replace Butler a midfield player, in an attack-minded formation.

ASTON VILLA (probable: 4-4-2): [illegible]

WEST BROMWICH ALBION (probable: 4-4-2): [illegible]

BIRMINGHAM CITY v STOCKPORT COUNTY
Today, 3.0

Mel Webb

Those with a lust for goals are on fallow ground at St Andrew's. Birmingham City's supporters have been starved of them this season, and until two weeks ago they were given precious few reasons to cheer.

Then Birmingham surprised everybody, themselves included, by scoring seven without reply at Stoke City. It did not last. Last week it was back to the old routine — Birmingham City 0 Huddersfield Town 0.

It is a problem that will not go away, especially at home, and Stockport County will fancy their chances as they try to reach the fifth round for the first time since 1950.

The clubs are meeting for the fifth time in the past 12 months, and in the same round at the same venue last season Birmingham beat Stockport 3-1. It is not likely to be so easy this time.

BIRMINGHAM CITY (probable: 3-4-3): [illegible]

STOCKPORT COUNTY (probable: 4-4-2): [illegible]

Referee: D Allison

CARDIFF CITY v READING
Today, 3.0

Russell Kempson

A rather naff-looking FA Cup tie has taken on a different perspective after two unrelated incidents this week. First, Gary Purser, writing his supporters' club notes in the Reading match-day programme, suggested that a visit to Cardiff City might not be the most enjoyable experience.

"Don't knock the police for keeping us in after the game," he wrote. "Believe me, it is for our own safety." Cardiff, the only third-division side left in the Cup, were not amused by the slight on their fans and have complained to the Football League.

Yesterday, with abject timing, the Welsh club decided to part company with Russell Osman, their manager. "The decision is part of a long-term strategy," Samesh Kumar, the chairman, said. Kenny Hibbitt will be in charge today for, believe it or not, a repeat of the 1927 semi-final at Molineux, which Cardiff won 3-0.

CARDIFF CITY (3-5-2): [illegible]

READING (4-4-2): [illegible]

Referee: S Lodge

CHARLTON ATHLETIC v WOLVERHAMPTON W
Today, 3.0

Brian Glanville

Two teams in form and a lively game in prospect. Charlton Athletic back the trend by using a pair of dynamic wingers in Shaun Newton and John Robinson. Clive Mendonca, the 29-year old striker, will pose a threat to Keith Curle and Dean Richards, the Wolverhampton Wanderers central defenders, who looked oddly shaky last time out when Wolves lost at Sheffield United.

Dougie Freedman, who has scored frequently since his transfer from Crystal Palace, will be fit to lead the Wolves attack, abetted by the forceful Don Goodman. Keane, the young Irishman, is a lively attacker from midfield. But Charlton are on a roll. They and their manager, Alan Curbishley, sense promotion and a packed stadium will roar them on. Charlton's defence must be on guard: it is not the equal of their attack.

CHARLTON ATHLETIC (probable: 4-4-2): [illegible]

WOLVERHAMPTON WANDERERS (probable: 3-4-3): [illegible]

Referee: G Poll

COVENTRY CITY v DERBY COUNTY
Today, 3.0

Richard Hobson

Gordon Strachan's black period can be traced to the previous meeting of these sides last November. David Elleray suffered the considerable wrath of his tongue and the combustible Coventry City manager has been a serial critic of referees ever since.

Good luck to Martin Bodenham today. Jim Smith, the Derby County manager, was more than mildly peeved at Bodenham's performance when officiating in Derby's defeat against Newcastle United in the Coca-Cola Cup.

Derby came from 2-0 behind to beat Coventry 3-2 in the fifth round of the FA Cup last season. They have worries over Sturridge (thigh) and Stimac who went to Croatia for a check on his back this week. Carsley, Darryl Powell and Eranio return after suspension, but Coventry miss Williams (hernia) and have a doubt over Breen (chest infection).

DERBY COUNTY (probable: [illegible]): [illegible]

COVENTRY CITY (probable: 4-4-2): [illegible]

Referee: M Bodenham

CRYSTAL PALACE v LEICESTER CITY
Today, 3.0

Man Dickinson

Ah, the romance of the FA Cup. Those in search of it might do well to stay away from Selhurst Park this afternoon, for it is hard to think of a tie more likely to need a replay.

These clubs have each lost three and drawn three of their past six games. Crystal Palace have lost six and drawn four of their ten FA Carling Premiership matches at home, and it is hard to see them breaking the sorry sequence in this game.

The return of Michele Padovano, after a hamstring injury, alongside the rehabilitating Tomas Brolin may give them extra firepower, but they are still without Lombardo and Shipperley and lost 1-0 at Barnsley last week.

On the same afternoon, Leicester City at least rediscovered some form in the goalless draw against Liverpool but, with Emile Heskey subdued, it would be optimistic to expect them to score.

CRYSTAL PALACE (probable: 5-3-2): [illegible]

LEICESTER CITY (probable: 5-3-2): [illegible]

Referee: P Alcock

HUDDERSFIELD TOWN v WIMBLEDON
Today, 3.0

Keith Pike

The McAlpine Stadium has already hosted one Cup upset this season — Emley's second-round win against Lincoln City — and the stage is set for another. Wimbledon, struggling for goals and form, seem ripe for picking off by a Huddersfield side revived under the managerial duo of Peter Jackson and Terry Yorath and with two former Cup-winners in their team in David Phillips and Barry Horne.

When Brian Horton was dismissed in October, Huddersfield had managed just four points from their opening nine Nationwide League first division games and were marooned at the bottom of the table. Seven new players followed Jackson's arrival as manager and they have won eight of their past 14 matches.

Semi-finalists last season, Wimbledon took two games to get past Wrexham in the third round. Defeat today would at least allow them to concentrate on Premiership survival.

HUDDERSFIELD TOWN (probable: 3-5-2): [illegible]

WIMBLEDON (probable: 4-4-2): [illegible]

Referee: D Elleray

IPSWICH TOWN v SHEFFIELD UNITED
Today, 3.0

Simon Wilde

There is plenty of incentive for Ipswich Town: when their visitors from Yorkshire came to Portman Road last season, they spoilt Ipswich's chances of promotion in the play-offs. Returning the favour by nipping a Cup run in the bud should provide reasonable compensation.

Ipswich's prospects improve with the returns of Jason Cundy and Bobby Petta after injury and illness. Kieron Dyer and Tony Mowbray undergo fitness tests. Their goal hopes rest with David Johnson, the Jamaican forward, who has scored nine times in 13 games.

Sheffield United, formidable at home, will be looking to their new forward partnership of Marcelo, who scored the winning goal against Wolverhampton Wanderers last week, and Peter Katchouro. "We will go at United from the word go," George Burley, the Ipswich manager, said yesterday.

IPSWICH TOWN (probable: 3-5-2): [illegible]

SHEFFIELD UNITED (probable: 4-3-1-2): [illegible]

Referee: A Wilde

FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Wise old man who refuses to look back in anger

A belief in fate and faith in the future has helped John Barnes to thrive at the highest level. He is never left to wonder 'if only . . .'

Barnes has no regrets about his move to Newcastle and, at 34, is enjoying his football as much as ever. Photograph: Marc Aspland

OLIVER HOLT

When the draw was made for the fourth round of the FA Cup and the hullabaloo about where to play the glamour game began, the media went to Victor Green, the self-publicist who runs Stevenage Borough, and Kenny Dalglish, the anti-publicist who is in charge of Newcastle United. It turned into a hoopla, an unnecessary, unseemly circus. If everyone had gone to John Barnes instead, it might all have been avoided.

At the grand old age of 34, Barnes has finished with fuss. He has seen it all and done it all, too. In his life, as in his football, he has distilled what he does into the acts that matter. He has cut away the periphery, banished ephemerality, ripped away the casing so that he gets to the kernel. Most of all, he refuses to worry about what might have been.

For those who can rise above the scepticism about age limiting his capabilities now that he has left Anfield after a decade in Liverpool red, Barnes is playing some of the most effective football of his career in a variety of positions. He is constantly trying to prompt life into the moribund forward line that was the Newcastle attack without Alan Shearer. His first touch is still as good as anybody's, his vision, his short, sharp passing and his aerial threat at set-pieces as telling as ever.

Tomorrow afternoon, amid the bluster of Broadhall Way, Barnes will be the beacon of calm that Newcastle will need to steady themselves, the eye of the storm of bitterness that is bound to be unleashed when the game kicks off and all the pent-up emotions about the wrangling over its staging and the supposed arrogance of the big-time boys from the FA Carling Premiership can be given free rein.

The game holds no terrors for him. "For every professional player," he said, "the biggest worry that they have is playing a cup-tie against a team in a lower position than they are on a dodgy pitch. From what we know, though, Stevenage have a good pitch, a first-class pitch, better than most of the lower divisions. So I do not think anyone will be worried. We are not taking it lightly. But we have nothing to fear.

"The return of Shearer in a couple of games has given the fans a big lift and encouraged everyone at the club. Hopefully, that will mean more goals and more success, but we must not fall into the trap of expecting too much too soon. It is still early days but, of course, it is a big help going into the Stevenage game."

Barnes has faced the kind of aggression and fervent hostility that is likely to greet him in Hertfordshire before. In the bad old days of the early Eighties, when he was playing for Watford, he was booed at away grounds because he was black. Later, during Graham Taylor's turbulent reign as England manager, he was subjected to merciless cat-calling during England's stuttering win over San Marino at Wembley. It is to his credit, then, that he has become fatalistic in his approach, not embittered.

"I am a great believer in fate," Barnes said. "That's how I live my life. Definitely. Not just in football. I don't feel any bitterness. It has helped me a lot. I have always loved Italian football, for instance, and I have always wanted to go and play in Italy, and then, when the opportunity may have arisen to do it, I ruptured my Achilles tendon so I didn't go. I don't regret that because, if I was meant to go, I would have gone.

"If I had been meant to stay at Liverpool and see out my career there, as I thought I would, then fate would have decreed it. Instead, I have joined Newcastle. That was the decision that was taken and it is the right decision, because it is the decision that was taken by whoever. You may think it's the manager. Who knows, maybe it wasn't the manager. Maybe that is what fate decides for you.

"You get on with life and whatever comes your way, you deal with it and it is the right thing to happen. Coming to Newcastle was 100 per cent right and, if I didn't go to Newcastle, that would have been right.

"What happens is that you never wrangle with your conscience about 'what if' and 'if only this had happened'. People are always saying 'if only Alan Shearer had been fit, we could have done this or that'. Well, I always say 'the fact is he wasn't, so there is no point going into what-ifs'. You have to make the most of whatever comes your way and whatever happens to you is meant to happen to you."

Three times in the past month, Barnes has been in a Newcastle team that has lost to Liverpool, the club where he spent his prime after a £900,000 move from Watford in 1987. Again, he says that there was no rancour behind his departure, that Roy Evans, the Liverpool manager, decided he was surplus to requirements, that he left "because of circumstance". "People leave and it is nothing to do with them as a player or as a person," Barnes said.

'You have to make the most of whatever comes your way'

Even though Dalglish and Newcastle had been going through troubled times, Barnes said that he was savouring his football more than ever. "Life is very similar to football," he said. "I say things to my kids that my parents used to say to me and I hear myself saying to young footballers now the same things that Pat Rice used to say to me when I was a 17-year-old at Watford.

"I thought that was just blah-blah-blah and now I am saying the same thing. It is like when you are 18, you go to nightclubs and, if you see people of 34 there, you think 'what are all these old people doing here'. I'm 34 now, but I don't think of myself as an older person, just a wiser person.

"Professionally and personally, I am wiser. You should get wiser as you get older with your experiences. Playing football you do. You appreciate more things. To be specific in football terms, I believe I see a team picture much more than I did when I was younger. I see how the team can be more effective as opposed to me being more effective and me looking as good.

"Footballers quite often go for what looks good, something that is pleasing to the eye and makes an individual look good rather than someone who does something that doesn't look so spectacular but is more effective. Now, I prefer to look at the whole team scenario rather than being the one who wants to score the goal or make the cross or the pass.

"I have got four children, three boys and a girl, and even with something as simple as 'what are we going to do today', I have to take them into consideration and their different characters and try to please everyone. When I didn't have those children, I could do what I wanted to do and never mind anything else.

"Regardless of what you want to do in life it takes hard work and commitment and I can see that and appreciate that now. I can see the similarities more, now, between football and life. I used to think that you could do totally different things in football than you could do in life but, in many respects, you shouldn't. In many respects, the way you are as a footballer reflects the way you are as a person and vice-versa."

The only thing that has irritated him in his time in the North East has been the local media's concentration on his age; that they used the fact that he and Stuart Pearce scored in the European Cup Champions' League game against Dynamo Kiev to point out that their combined years came to 69. Barnes has a reply to that, too, though.

"Where the youngsters are concerned," he said, "they say now that if you are good enough, you are old enough. Well, I say if you are good enough you are young enough as regards the players who are older." Tomorrow, at Broadhall Way, his maxim may well be borne out.

Regis views Midland derby from historic standpoint

By Richard Hobson

WHEN Cyrille Regis made his debut for West Bromwich Albion 22 years ago, the old first division included five clubs from the West Midlands. Each contest between them was passionately fought: each result brought joy or misery to homes, schools and factories in and around Birmingham.

Aston Villa have remained in the top flight, save for one season, 1987-88, and Coventry City are immune from relegation, but West Bromwich Albion, Birmingham City and Wolverhampton Wanderers have yet to feature in the FA Carling Premiership. A decrease in the number of derby matches simply raises expectations when they do occur.

So, leaving aside Stevenage v Newcastle, the most appetising tie of the FA Cup fourth round could be the one that pits Villa against Albion at Villa Park today. A number of Albion players saw Villa beat Portsmouth 1-0 in the third round replay when Villa were so lethargic that they were actually booed off by their own supporters. Twenty-four hours earlier, Albion had positively buzzed as they dismissed Stoke City.

Regis, who ended a career spanning 19 seasons by taking up a coaching position with Albion just over a year ago, played for both Villa and Albion — as well as Coventry and Wolves — so understands what is at stake.

"Villa will want to get their season back on track, and possibly the Cup is their best chance to get into Europe again," Regis said. "It is a difficult time for them, but Albion fans would love to have their difficulties. I think the top division is Albion's natural home. But we haven't been there since 1986.

"When I started, we had a derby match every month and the pressure on us from friends, family and supporters was relentless. When we won, we were heroes; when we lost, we were made to feel we had let people down badly. At least we knew we could redeem ourselves a few weeks later, but this match is a one-off. If we can beat Villa our fans will chant about it for the rest of the season."

Brian Little is probably fireproof as Villa manager regardless of the result — not least because his side remains in the Uefa Cup. Yet Villa's performance today, following the 5-0 defeat at Blackburn Rovers, will provide a far more accurate indication of the state of the club than any of Little's comments.

"What makes a good player, a good team, is the reaction when things go wrong," Regis said. "I think people in the game will expect Villa to come back fighting, but you can only tell players the importance of mental strength. Basically, you either have it or you don't."

Regis, however, knows better than to predict the result. In 1987 he won the Cup with Coventry; two years later they lost to Sutton United, a non-league club.

FA CUP FOURTH-ROUND PREVIEWS

LEEDS UNITED v GRIMSBY TOWN
Today, 3.0

Lynne Critchley

The rejuvenated Grimsby Town, with Alan Buckley back at the helm, are no strangers to the sweet taste of success against FA Carling Premiership clubs, and Leeds United will do well to remember this. In the Coca-Cola Cup, they beat Leicester City, the holders, as well as Sheffield Wednesday before losing away to Liverpool.

Grimsby, relegated to the Nationwide League second division last season, lie fifth with only one defeat in their past 15 games.

George Graham will be keen for Leeds to reassert themselves after a recent slump that has seen them win only once in their past seven matches. Nigel Martyn returns in goal, but Lucas Radebe is out with a back injury. For Grimsby, Peter Handyside returns after suspension and striker Jack Lester is expected to be on the bench.

LEEDS UNITED (probable: 4-4-2): N Martyn — A Harte, R Molenaar, D Wetherall, D Robertson — G Kelly, L Bowyer, D Hopkin, B Rocca — J Forrester, H Kewell.

GRIMSBY TOWN (probable: 4-4-2): A Pollitt — W Wollaston, P Handyside, M Lever, T Bancroft — K Donkin, P Groves, [illegible], D Smith — S Livingstone, D [illegible].

Referee: G Barber.

■ PREDICTION: home win.

MANCHESTER UNITED v WALSALL
Today, 3.0

Nick Szczepanik

Walsall go to Old Trafford full of optimism, according to Derek Mountfield, the player-coach and an FA Cup-winner with Everton in 1984; they are in form, and can even field a France international striker in their No 7 shirt. No, not that one, although Roger Boli (19 goals this season) was a team-mate of Cantona's at Auxerre.

Andy Watson scored the goal in Walsall's 1-0 victory at Southend United in front of 3,310 people a week ago; the 55,000 today will include about 8,500 from the West Midlands, despite rows over ticket allocation — £25 spent in the club shop got you to the front of the queue. At least they are unlikely to have to shell out for replay tickets, although, for those not wanting to think the unthinkable, a little reminder of what is possible: September 20, 1995, Coca-Cola Cup second round — Manchester United 0, York City 3.

MANCHESTER UNITED (probable: 4-4-2): P Schmeichel — G Neville, R Johnsen, G Pallister, D Irwin — D Beckham, N Butt, P Scholes, R Giggs — D G Solskjaer, A Cole.

WALSALL (possible: 4-4-2): J Walker — W Evans, D Mountfield, A Vivash, S Marsh — M Blake, J-F Peron, G Porter, J Hodge — A Watson, R Bob.

Referee: P Durkin.

■ PREDICTION: Not a cricket score, but a home win nevertheless.

MIDDLESBROUGH v ARSENAL
Today, 3.0

Michael Henderson

This is the tastiest tie of the round, the sort of game to provide a surprise, though how surprising would a home win be? Middlesbrough, finalists in the FA Cup and Coca-Cola Cup last year, are working up a fair head of steam in their attempt to return to the FA Carling Premiership, and an Arsenal team without Seaman, Keown and Wright is there to be beaten. Alex Manninger, a 20-year-old Austrian, who takes Seaman's place, can expect a busy afternoon.

Merson, playing for the first time against his former club, will relish the occasion, though he is not the only attacker who can supply width. Bryan Robson, the Middlesbrough manager, has nominated Ormerod and Campbell, teenagers who can play down the wing, as possible starters, suggesting that Middlesbrough are not scared of pressing Arsenal where they are most vulnerable.

MIDDLESBROUGH (possible: 4-4-2): M Schwarzer — N Mcaldison, S Vickers, N Pearson, G Festa — A Ormerod, R Mustoe, A Townsend, A Campbell — P Merson, M Beck.

ARSENAL (probable: 4-4-2): A Manninger — L Dixon, A Adams, S Bould, N Winterburn — R Parlour, E Petit, P Vieira, M Overmars — D Bergkamp, N Anelka.

Referee: M Riley.

■ PREDICTION: 1-1.

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR v BARNSLEY
Today, 3.0

Rob Hughes

The recuperative powers of the Cup, breathing hope and financial life into struggling clubs, takes hold at White Hart Lane, where every £18 ticket has been sold for Tottenham Hotspur against Barnsley.

The form of last month, when Spurs wiped out Barnsley 3-0 in the league, points to a home banker, despite Barnsley having taken seven points from their past four league games.

Jan-Aage Fjortoft is crutched and likely to be replaced by Georgi Hristov in the Barnsley attack, though the manager has diligently built competition for most places. Adrian Moses and Arjan de Zeeuw are available after suspension. Tottenham's David Howells is fully fit after seven weeks' absence, but Gary Mabbutt is out after injuring a big toe in a practice match to help Les Ferdinand recover match fitness.

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR (possible, 4-4-1-1): E Beardsley — S Carr, R Vega, S Campbell, C Wilson — R Fox, C Calderwood, N Berti, A Sinton — D Ginola — J Khazaroni.

BARNSLEY (possible; 4-4-2): D Watson — N Eadon, P Markwell, C Morgan, D Barnard — C Mascalle, N Redfearn, D Sheridan, E Tinkler — A Ward, G Hristov.

Referee: G Ashby.

■ PREDICTION: The cockerels to crow for Tottenham.

TRANMERE ROVERS v SUNDERLAND
Today, 3.0

Bill Edgar

Sunderland are the only team during the past 15 years to reach an FA Cup Final while outside the top flight, and a 17-match unbeaten run before the trip today to Tranmere Rovers, their Nationwide League first division rivals, has raised hopes of a repeat this season.

To add spice, their first FA Cup match against Merseyside opposition since that Wembley defeat by Liverpool in 1992 gives Kevin Phillips, their striker, the chance to equal a club record of scoring in eight successive games.

That seems a strong possibility as Tranmere are languishing in the relegation zone without a win in eight league matches, while Sunderland occupy a play-off position.

The third-round exits of Liverpool and Everton mean Tranmere's bid to equal their best FA Cup run — to the fifth round in 1968 — will be given Merseyside's full attention.

TRANMERE ROVERS (possible, 3-5-2): S Simonson — G Stevens, J McGreal, D Challinor — A Morgan, C Hill, L O'Brien, M Mellon, A Thompson — J Aldridge, G Jones.

SUNDERLAND (possible; 4-4-2): L Perez — D Holloway, J Craddock, R Ord, M Gray — N Summerbee, A Rae, L Clark, A Johnston — N Quinn, K Phillips.

Referee: M Reed.

■ PREDICTION: Sunderland's first win at Prenton Park.

MANCHESTER CITY v WEST HAM UNITED
Tomorrow, 2.0

David Maddock

Clearly, when Frank Clark says that this match tomorrow is Manchester City's FA Cup Final, he means it. The team has been fitted with new suits, a ritual normally reserved for an appearance at Wembley.

With his side struggling at the wrong end of the Nationwide League first division, and a jobless Joe Royle hovering, Clark knows that an FA Cup run offers a respite from the constant criticism. "You could say this is a big game for us, especially for me," the manager said yesterday, only half in jest.

Harry Redknapp, the West Ham United manager, must decide whether he will stand by Samassi Abou, after the French forward's eccentric behaviour at Tottenham Hotspur last week. Steve Lomas plays against his former club. "We have a few ideas in store for him," Michael Brown, a close friend and opponent tomorrow, said.

MANCHESTER CITY (possible, 4-3-1-2): T Wright — I Brightwell, M Sheilla, K Symons, R Edghill — P Dickov, M Brown, G Wiekens — G Kinkladze — C Russell, U Rosler.

WEST HAM UNITED (possible; 4-4-2): C Forrest — K Rowland, D Unsworth, R Ferdinand, F Lampard — J Moncur, I Bishop, E Berkovic, S Lazaridis — J Hartson, S Abou.

Referee: D Gallagher.

■ PREDICTION: Brainstorm. City to win.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH v NEWCASTLE UNITED
Tomorrow, 4.30

Rob Hughes

Fate, and football's great divide, twinned Newcastle with Stevenage before this season began.

In August, Alan Shearer, Newcastle's £15 million record signing, broke an ankle and ruptured ligaments. Two days later, Paul Thompson, Boro's £19,000 record signing, a striker and a Geordie, suffered similar injuries. The ultimate in medical care, aided by full-time dedication, has put Shearer back into contention for tomorrow's tie, while Thompson, with a job to do outside the game, has yet to kick a ball in anger for Stevenage.

There lies just one difference between two clubs 260 miles and several divisions apart, and Boro goalie Des Gallagher may need materials from his trade in insulation to prevent a Newcastle victory crowding in. Batty is back, Shearer may be, and Newcastle's nerve should hold.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH (possible: 4-4-2): D Gallagher — J Dillnutt, M Smith, R Trott, M Love — J Soloman, D Fenton, S Perkins, N Trebble — G Crawshaw, D Wordsworth.

NEWCASTLE UNITED (possible: 3-5-1-1): S Hislop — W Barton, S Watson, S Pearce — K Gillespie, R Lee, D Batty, A Pistone, J Beresford — J Barnes — A Shearer.

Referee: P Jones.

■ PREDICTION: Newcastle 3-1.

FIRST 11 ELEVEN

RUNNING SCARED

Newcastle United's reluctance to get their hands dirty at Stevenage Borough is not the first time that a team has fought shy of fulfilling its obligations. Here are some other cases.

1. Russia (World Cup qualifier, 1973)
The Soviets refused to play in a Santiago stadium that had been used for political executions and Chile celebrated by kicking off and walking the ball into the net.

2. Celtic (world club championship, 1967)
After Ronnie Simpson had been hit on the head by a piece of metal BEFORE the second leg, Celtic considered withdrawing from the play-off in Montevideo. Their instincts were right — they lost and had three men sent off.

3. Estonia (World Cup qualifier, 1996)
They couldn't agree on a kick-off time with Scotland but, sensing a rare victory, Craig Brown's boys turned up anyway.

4. Middlesbrough (Premiership, 1996)
Bryan Robson's mum sent a sick note to Blackburn, but those nasty men from the FA said they should shit have played the game and not stayed at home with the central heating on.

5. Israel (World Cup qualifier, 1957)
Wales were the beneficiaries of the reluctance of several countries to play Israel, sneaking through to their only appearance in the finals as a result.

6. Chelsea (Cup Winners' Cup, 1997)
The fancy dans from the King's Road thought it was too chilly in Tromso. Well it is in the Arctic Circle.

7. AC Milan (European Cup 1991)
Ruud led the rebellion after the lights went out in their semi-final. Nothing to do with Marseilles's Chris Waddle running them ragged, of course.

8. India (1950 World Cup)
They declined a chance to compete in the finals after Fifa ordered that all players had to wear boots.

9. Queen's Park (1871 to 1883)
Entered English FA Cup eight times in that period but decided to scratch on seven occasions.

10. Aston Villa (FA Cup, 1880)
Villa scratched from the competition rather than be intellectually humbled by the mighty minds of Oxford University.

11. Man United (Coca-Cola Cup)
Any year you care to mention, really.

Compiled by Richard Whitehead

هكذا من الإصل

RACING: ALNER-TRAINED CHASER COMPLETES ASCOT TREBLE IN GAME FASHION

Cool Dawn upholds Festival claim

BY CHRIS MCGRATH

THE sponsor left Cool Dawn at 25-1 for the Tote Cheltenham Gold Cup after he completed an Ascot treble yesterday, but nobody should neglect that he had revealed another asset to complement the bold athleticism of his jumping. He is unflinchingly brave.

If talk of the Gold Cup was to retain any conviction, he certainly had to win the OK Soil Remediation Ltd Handicap Chase. On the face of it, his three rivals were either out of form or out of their depth. In the event, Tony McCoy galvanised Go Ballistic — fourth at Cheltenham last year — to take on Cool Dawn in front, so that he was forced to race flat out and without respite. Andrew Thornton kept his eye on the ball, however, and Cool Dawn jumped superbly under sustained pressure.

It was Go Ballistic who cracked, blundering at the last ditch and ejecting the champion jockey. Still Cool Dawn could not relax, the mischievous Orswell Lad creeping into contention — in receipt of 28lb — as they turned for home. Despite the sticky going, Cool Dawn kept pulling out more and, unwavering at his fences, held off the challenger by two lengths.

Thornton is now unbeaten in three races at Ascot since taking over the reins from Cool Dawn's owner, Dido Harding. "The reason Go Ballistic made that mistake was because he was getting tired," he said. "I was always confident that Cool Dawn would pick up again, just as he did when the other horse came at us. He was dossing, really, just got a bit lonely and I only gave him one crack. He is good long and good when he just pops them. Jumping and galloping, that's his forte. He is in great heart and improving all the time."

HUGH ROUTLEDGE

Cool Dawn, left, leads eventual faller Go Ballistic on his way to completing a treble at Ascot yesterday

Robert Alner, who trains the former hunter in Dorset, added: "He was giving a lot of weight in dead ground, and this race was just what he needed. Cheltenham has got to be a distinct possibility now, though he may have one more race." That is likely to be the Racing Post Chase at Kempton on February 28.

McCoy, usually so adhesive, had already been thrown out of the saddle in the PML Lightning Novices' Chase, Direct Route deciding to omit the second-last fence. A close third at the time, he would have done well to match the gallop sustained by Wade Road, who beat Hurricane Lamp by six lengths — staking a claim to the Guinness Arkle Trophy in the process.

Henrietta Knight, the winning trainer, said: "The best thing that happened was that he made a mistake and landed short at the fence where Lake Kariba fell early on. Otherwise, he would have been brought down. We've always hoped that he would be an Arkle horse and he will probably go straight there now."

The Land Agent appeals on survey of chasing debut

HAYDOCK PARK

BBC1

1.15: The problems of Dato Star, unraced since this contest last year, are typical of most of the field — none more so than Relkeel. While the latter's reappearance win at Cheltenham was a stirring sight, he remains too fragile to trust with a bet, and is 11lb worse off with **Collier Bay** for less than two lengths. The former champion, from a stable in form, can pounce on the front-running Indefence.

1.45: Though Earth Summit enjoys a slog through the mud, he races with plenty of dash and will not be inconvenienced by dropping back in distance. Indian Tracker proved just too exuberant when taking him on in the Welsh National, and faded in the straight. General Wolfe goes well here, but is liable to mistakes. **Nahthen Lad** stays well, goes in the ground and is well treated, thanks to a spell in the wilderness after beating Mr Mulligan in the Sun Alliance Chase. He caught the eye over an inadequate trip on his return.

2.15: Last year's winner, Ocean Hawk, put up a game effort when second to Mighty Moss at Cheltenham last time, and is 5lb better off for a head. His principal duty, however, may be to ensure a decent pace for **Paddy's Return**. Things were rather set up for him at Ascot last time, but he is nonetheless a top-class hurdler.

TODAY'S RACING ON TELEVISION

KEMPTON PARK

CHANNEL 4

2.05: Seod Rioga may go well at a big price on his return to timber, his stable having hit form, though he earned a higher rating over fences on faster ground. That would also suit Far Dawn, while Toby Brown and Big Strand need more of a test than is likely round here, especially if this is steadily run. That should not hinder the potential class act in the race, **Three Farthings**. Though he needs to jump better, he skated home over course and distance last time, and can outpace more exposed rivals off an 8lb higher mark.

2.35: Kadastrof, the clear form pick, has had half a dozen races already this season, enduring the hardest last time under top weight in a Sandown handicap. He may be ready for a break. Morstock confirmed a flair for fences over course and distance last time, while Stompin shaped well enough on his Ludlow chasing debut. But it may be worth a second look at **The Land Agent**. A decent hurdler, he coped slickly with the big Sandown fences when given a sympathetic introduction to chasing, in a much hotter race.

3.10: Nipper Reed was allowed to dominate at Ascot last week, but — having raced from out of the handicap — is only 2lb higher today. Alabang, who may have hit the front too soon when a close third at Sandown last time, has now gone up 11lb for two defeats. Nahrawali, claimer-ridden when second that day, is now ridden by Richard Dunwoody. Both, however, may prefer slightly quicker ground. Serenus won in the mud over course and distance, but faces his stiffest task off a 7lb higher mark. **Dr Bones** confirmed himself unpredictable last time, suffering a breathing problem, but he is still well treated on some of his Irish form, and it could be worth chancing that he bounces back to form.

3.40: Easy Buck could run a big race despite a long absence, but there will be even better value about **Montecot**, who had some classy form in France and ran a fine race against Young Kenny at this track last season. He has had problems of his own, quite apart from his stable's long quiet period, but both now seem over. He had a pipe-opener over hurdles recently, and could prove well treated.

CHRIS MCGRATH

HAYDOCK PARK

THUNDERER

12.45 Kadou Nonantais
1.15 Collier Bay
1.45 GENERAL WOLFE (nap)
2.15 Paddy's Return
2.45 Sparkling Cone
3.20 Lake Kariba
3.50 Festive Teak

Timekeeper's top rating: 2.15 OCEAN HAWK.

GOING: SOFT (HEAVY IN PLACES ON HURDLES COURSE) SIS

12.45 NORTH WEST RACING CLUB NOVICES HURDLE
(£2,505: 2m 4f) (16 runners)

1 1PP-PP1 EASBY JOKER 29 (D,F,G,S) (G Orchard) S Kettlewell 10-11-11 N Williamson 112
2 11 KADOU NONANTAIS 24 (G,S) (D & G Mercer) D Sherwood 5-11-11 J A McCarthy [illegible]
3 00/01 MAJESTIC SOUND 35 (C,S) (Lord Lewisham) T Forster 7-11-11 R Johnson 117
4 3305102 TAMARINDO 2 (G,S) (D Jennison) M Pipe 5-11-11 A P McCoy 120
5 W/P- BOLD STREET 1385F (Codan Trust Company) M Pipe 8-11-8 J Dolder –
6 DISPOL PRINCE 1899F (R Cook) O Gibroyd 5-11-6 P Midgley (3) –
7 000/0/ FLYING FREDDIE 691 (J Waghi) R Batsman 7-11-6 D Bentley –
8 /00P2-4 JUST ONE QUESTION 25 (B) (Duchess of Westminster) J J O'Neill 5-11-6 A Dobbin –
9 20/F-4P KALADROSS 67 (R Howell) W Jenks 7-11-6 T Jenks –
10 1-14 KINGS MEASURE 28 (G) (J Wilson) J Jefferson 5-11-6 L Wyer –
11 P4F-0 MIDDLE BAY 25 (Bruce Partnership) D Nicholls 7-11-6 D J Moffatt –
12 11121 MUSKHILL 1 (G,S) (J D Bailey) D Nicholson 7-11-1 DOUBTFUL 119
13 3/220U- SUPREME SENOTHIN 329 (BF,S) (W Sturt) J Old 9-11-6 C Llewellyn –
14 4-3 SWEET LORD 73 (I S Networking Solutions Ltd) M Bradstock 7-11-6 C Maude 97
15 120-20 TOM'S RIVER 25 (BF,S) (Lemon Partnership) Mrs M Reveley 8-11-6 G Lee 113
16 9330-0 SIDE BY SIDE 58 (S Brown) C Thornton 7-11-1 O Pears –

BETTING: 11-4 Kings Measure, 3-1 Kadou Nonantais, 4-1 Tamarindo, 5-1 Majestic Sound, 10-1 Easby Joker, 12-1 Sweet Lord, Tom's River, 20-1 others.

1997: HARBOUR ISLAND 5-11-6 C Maude (3-1) M Pipe 14 ran

1.15 HAYDOCK TRAVELLING THE TURF CHAMPION HURDLE TRIAL (Grade II: £12,380: 2m) (6 runners) BBC1

1 -400240 BLOWING WIND 7 (G) (P Deal) M Pipe 5-11-12 A P McCoy 120
2 111-2-1 RELKEEL 42 (CD,G,S) (Trustees of late J Hanson) J Nicholson 9-11-10 R Johnson 170
3 11.1P-3 COLLIER BAY 42 (D,S) (W Sturt) J Old 6-11-7 C Llewellyn 175
4 1F.32- DATO STAR 371 (D,S) (R Ring) J Jefferson 7-11-3 L Wyer –
5 3111D INDEFENCE 666 (D,S) (Intel Ltd, Mrs J Firman) 7-11-3 D Leahy –
6 6132-11 NIPPER REED 7 (D,G,S) (G Fox) F Gray 6-11-3 2nd preference 156

BETTING: Even Collier Bay, 5-4 Relkeel, 8-1 Dato Star, 16-1 Indefence, 33-1 Blowing Wind.

1997: MISTINGUETT 5-11-2 C Llewellyn 3-1 J Tuxton-Davies 9 ran

FORM FOCUS: Relkeel beat Philbert (11lb in 8-runner hurdle grade II at Cheltenham (2m 1f good), with Collier Bay (11lb better off) 14l 3rd. Dato Star 4l 2nd of 9 to Mistongueen in hurdle grade II at Haydock (2m, good to firm) previously 1l 3rd of 6 to Space Traveller in handicap hurdle at Newcastle (2m, good). Indefence 2lb 7th of 10 to Silver Shield in novice hurdle at Ascot (2m 4f, good to firm) previously beat 7 runners 8l in 27-runner novice hurdle grade I at Cheltenham (2m, good to soft).

COLLIER BAY is weighted to take his revenge on Relkeel

1.45 PETER MARSH CHASE LIMITED HANDICAP BBC1
(Grade II: £25,438: 3m) (10 runners)

1 1F3-116 SIMPLY DASHING 42 (BF,G,F,G,S) (J Hemmings) T Easterby 7-11-13 L Wyer 170
2 P5-1F2 BAYLIS 25 (B,C,F,G,S) (D Wynne) Miss H Knight 8-11-8 R Johnson 158
3 121142 EUCIPE 56 (B,C,G,S) (D Jennison) M Pipe 6-11-4 A P McCoy 163
4 25P-551 EARTH SUMMIT 28 (B,CD,G,S) (Summit Club) N Twiston-Davies 10-10-13 T Jenks 175
5 0P/P0-3 NANTHEN LAD 23 (C,G,S) (J Snape-Mills) P Hiatt 8-10-11 D Leahy 155
6 121-62P HARWELL LAD 14 (D,F,G,S) (A Mulligan) M Pipe 7-10-10 Mr R Walsh 166
7 1-03-20 GENERAL WOLFE 96 (CD,G,S) (Morning Line) T Forster 9-10-10 N Williamson 165
8 4P-P540 CO BALLISTIC 1 (D,F,G,S) (Mrs B Sizeland) C Dwyer 7-10-7 A Dobbin 158
9 21-112 STRATH ROYAL 9 (D,F,G,S) (Jack Ace Partnership) D Barron 10-10-6 M Brennan 155
10 1/P3-P3 INDIAN TRACKER 29 (G) (J S Lockhart) M Pipe 8-10-1 C Maude 165

BETTING: 4-1 Indian Tracker, 5-1 Nanthen Lad, Simply Dashing, 6-1 Earth Summit, Eucipe, 7-1 General Wolfe, 8-1 Baylis, Harwell Lad, 16-1 Co Ballistic, 20-1 Strath Royal.

1997: JODAMI 12-11-10 N Williamson (4-1) F Murphy 8 ran

FORM FOCUS: Simply Dashing 11l 4th of 9 to Sarsi (8l better off) in handicap chase at Cheltenham (3m 5f good), previously beat Fine Thyne 5l in 11-runner handicap chase at Ascot (3m 2f 110yd, good to soft). Eucipe 17l 2nd of 14 to Surry Express in handicap chase grade II at Newbury (3m 2f 110yd, good to soft) with General Wolfe (2lb better off) 25l 7th. Earth Summit beat Dom Samourai 14l in 14-runner handicap chase at Cheltenham (3m 5f 110yd, heavy) with Indian Tracker 43l better off 20l 5th and Baylis 8lb better off 35l 6th. Nanthen Lad 6l 2nd of 6 to Celtic Pride in handicap chase at Cheltenham (3m 5f, good to soft), previously 25l 9th of 36 to Lord Sylvane in Grand National at Aintree (3m 4f, good) with General Wolfe (4lb worse off) 1l behind 16th and Co Ballistic (14lb worse off) pulled up. Harwell Lad pulled up in handicap chase at Sandown (3m 5f 110yd, good to soft) previously 5l 2nd of 6 to Cool Dawn in handicap chase at Ascot (3m 110yd, good to soft) with Co Ballistic (7lb better off) 49l 6th. Strath Royal 2½l 2nd of 6 to Fair Mix Gale in handicap chase at Kelso (2m 1f, soft), previously beat Mister Ba 12l in 4-runner handicap chase at Wetherby (2m 1f, soft).

INDIAN TRACKER can call for a long win last time and will be suited by this course trip

FORM FOCUS: Paddy's Return beat Philbert 19l in 7-runner hurdle at Ascot (3m 1f 110yd, good to soft), previously 20l 5th of 15 to Bog Frog in hurdle at Aintree (2m 1f 110yd, good to soft). Mighty Moss beat Ocean Hawk (5lb better off) neck in 5-runner hurdle at Cheltenham (3m 110yd, good to soft)

PADDY'S RETURN improved at Ascot and can follow up

2.15 TOTE PREMIER LONG DISTANCE HURDLE BBC1
(Grade II: £12,320: 2m 7f 110yd) (4 runners)

1 1100-22 OCEAN HAWK 23 (CD,F,G,S) (M Arnold) N Twiston-Davies 6-11-10 C Llewellyn [illegible]
2 001-251 PADDY'S RETURN 35 (F,G,S) (P O'Donnell) F Murphy 6-11-10 N Williamson 160
3 2222-21 MIGHTY MOSS 23 (G,S) (K Hatley) D Nicholson 7-11-7 Mr F Hobby 157
4 0-FF214 SUCKHOUSE BOY 1 (G,S) (Beatty Boys) C Nicholson 8-11-3 DOUBTFUL 161

BETTING: 4-6 Paddy's Return, 3-1 Ocean Hawk, 7-2 Mighty Moss.

1997: OCEAN HAWK 5-11-10 C Llewellyn (evens fav) N Twiston-Davies 5 ran

2.45 ALLEN PLC NOVICES CHASE
(£7,165: 2m 4f) (5 runners)

1 4P-1P11 CHIPPED OUT 29 (G,S) (Clemens Racing) M Todhunter 8-11-12 L Wyer [illegible]
2 11-3311 DIWALI DANCER 35 (CD,F,G,S) (B Cass) M Pipe 5-11-12 A P McCoy 138
3 3/5P-11 SPARKLING CONE 28 (S) (Mrs M Nesbitt) Miss L Williams 9-11-12 N Williamson 142
4 022/333 REELS LIKE GOLD 9 (S) (Independent Racing) S Richards 10-11-4 A Dobbin 134
5 /46133- ONE WORD 276 (S) (Berkshire Ltd) D Williams 8-11-4 Mr S Durack –

BETTING: 11-8 Sparkling Cone, 11-4 Diwali Dancer, 4-1 Chipped Out, 5-1 Reels Like Gold, 16-1 One Word.

1997: SIMPLY DASHING 6-11-12 R Dunwoody (2-7 fav) T Easterby 4 ran

3.20 ANNUAL BADGEHOLDERS CLUB HANDICAP CHASE
(£7,068: 2m) (8 runners)

1 F31-3P8 FLYING INSTRUCTOR 35 (CD,F,G,S) (J Hemmings) P P Heger 8-12-0 J McCarthy 139
2 -21112P LAKE KARIBA 1 (D,G,S) (F Barker) H Daly 9-11-13 [illegible]
3 33-2312 BARNAGEERA BOY 36 (BF,CD,G,S) (Mrs J Morgan) A Jones 9-11-4 T Jenks [illegible]
4 112-PP4 THUMBS UP 8 (CD,F,G,S) (Mrs S Taylor) S Mellor 12-11-3 Mr D Harvey (7) 129
5 53U412- NORDANCE PRINCE 235 (S,F) (Prince Sports Group) J Wilman 7-10-4 N Williamson 133
6 /21113- MAPLE DANCER 604 (CD,F,G,S) (Chapman Ltd) J Old 7-10-2 G Sheldon (7) –

BETTING: 3-1 Lake Kariba, 3-1 Flying Instructor, 7-2 Barnageera Boy, 5-1 Thumbs Up, 7-1 Nordance Prince, 20-1 Maple Dancer.

1997: KONYEKTA KING 9-10-13 F Dunwoody, 9-2 fav C Sherwood 5 ran

3.50 HAYDOCK STANDARD OPEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE
(£1,609: 2m) (11 runners)

1 F-11 FESTIVE TEAK 35 (CD,S) (J Worrall) J Jenkins 5-11-10 R Massey (3) –
2 ADVANCED STEEL (P Sutton) Miss K Marples 5-11-4 W Dwan –
3 CHOICE CUT (H Ashworth) T Dascombe 5-11-4 O Pears –
4 00.0 CELLA'S DEVIL 46 (P Mason) J Jones 6-11-4 A Dobbin –
5 FREDDIE (D Tayor) P Evans 5-11-4 M Dunne (5) –
6 SPOOF'S MY GAME (Peter Spoof) T Easterby 5-11-4 L Wyer –
7 THE PICKLED PUNK 28 (Starlight Racing) R Johnson 5-11-4 R Johnson –
8 6 WELDILYFRANK 18 (P Molloy) W W Musson 5-11-4 N Williamson –
9 GRYMAR LASS 58 (P Hodgson) P P Heger 5-11-4 J A McCarthy –
10 INDIAN SPRING (Mrs S Pearson) M Pipe 5-11-4 O Mitchell –
11 NEW RELEASE (J Ennis) M Pipe 5-11-4 J Huet (7) –

BETTING: 4-5 Festive Teak, 3-1 Indian Spring, 8-1 Choice Cut, 9-1 Cella's Devil, The Pickled Punk, 10-1 Spoof's My Game, 25-1 Weldilyfrank, Grymar Lass, 33-1 others.

1997: COLOUR CODE 5-11-11 J Lower (evens fav) Mrs S Sanderson 8 ran

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS	Wins	Rides	%	JOCKEYS	Winners	Rides	%
T Forster	6	13	46.1	J Culloty	3	8	37.5
D Sherwood	5	12	41.7	L Cummins	10	41	24.4
O Pears	21	52	40.4	L Wyer	4	18	22.2
J Jefferson	5	13	38.5	J Culloty	3	16	21.1
O Mitchell	2	6	33.3	C Maude	3	18	16.7
N Twiston-Davies	6	18	33.3	R Dunwoody	11	68	16.2
J Old	3	12	25.0	A Dobbin	7	48	14.6

O'Dwyer makes rare visit pay

CONOR O'DWYER made only his second visit to Kelso pay yesterday when taking the Ashleybank Scottish Borders National on Slideofhill. The Irish jockey, who has ridden the winners of The Ladbroke and the Victor Chandler Chase in recent weeks, had to work hard on the Jonjo O'Neill-trained runner in the four-mile contest, although he was helped by the fall of the favourite, Unguided Missile, at the eighteenth fence. Marello took her unbeaten record to nine in the Tim Doody White Line Morebattle Hurdle. "She needed it for Newbury [the Tote Gold Trophy] but would not go if she has to carry top weight of 11st 10lb," winning trainer, Mary Reveley, said.

KEMPTON PARK

THUNDERER

1.00 King On The Run
1.35 Lottery Ticket
2.05 Brownes Hill Lad
2.35 The Land Agent
3.10 Shahrur
3.40 Monks Soham
4.10 Dunbury Flyer

GUIDE TO OUR IN-LINE RACECARD

101 113143 GOOD TIMES 13 (BF,F,G,S) (Mrs D Robinson) B Hall 12-0 B West (7) 88

Racecard number. Six-figure form (F — fell, P — pulled up, U — unseated rider, B — brought down, S — slipped up, R — refused, D — disqualified). Horse's name. Days since last outing: F if fell, B — blinkers, V — visor, H — hood, E — Eyeshield, C — course winner, D — distance winner, CD — course and distance winner, BF — beaten favourite in latest race). Going on which horse has won (F — firm, good to firm, hard, G — good, S — soft, good to soft, heavy). Owner in brackets. Trainer. Age and weight. Rider plus any allowance. Timekeeper's speed rating.

GOING: SOFT (GOOD TO SOFT IN PLACES) TOTE JACKPOT MEETING SIS

1.00 MIDDLESEX NOVICES HURDLE (£3,074: 2m 5f) (15 runners)

101 2313 BRACEY RUN 14 (S) (Coachlamp) J Old 5-11-4 M A Fitzgerald 139
102 1-31 KING ON THE RUN 25 (G,S) (Lady Harris) D Nicholson 5-11-4 R Thornton [illegible]
103 0F ARGUABLY 28 (Chris C Murray) G Balding 5-11-0 B Fox –
104 0 BROUGHTON BLAZE 24 (Broughton Thermal Insulation) W Musson 7-11-0 B Fenton –
105 5065-05 EMBARGO 35 (J Denton) J Dolton 8-11-0 Mr H Dolton (7) 100
106 0310- ENDEAVOUR 316 (S) (M Roberts) M J Roberts 6-11-0 G Bradley –
107 FPP KINGS ANGEL 3 (Chance Partnership) A Foster 7-11-0 W Marston –
108 4P-0 LORD ELLANSMAN 5F (B) (Sturgeon Racing Pies) R Ingram 5-11-0 D Gallagher –
109 0433-20 MOON DEVIL 42 (Ca Cola Scotland) M Cannon 5-11-0 B Powell 118
110 P-32 PROSPERO 50 (Mrs G Scanlon) Mrs A Perrett 5-11-0 R Dunwoody 104
111 0-000 SILVER GULL 9 (J Bull, A Clapp & T Hamlin) H Head 7-11-0 R Green –
112 4-5324 SKYCAB 1 (P Betts (Holdings) Ltd) J Gifford 6-11-0 DOUBTFUL –
113 3 SOMOVIGUN 29 (BF) (Kaisch Foods Ltd) D Sherwood 6-11-0 A Thornton –
114 PP02- OVER THE GLEN 285P (The Chancellorsby Pony) J Gifford 6-10-9 P Hide –
115 3/0-3 SUPER SAFRROR 33 (R Warren) B Smart 5-10-9 T J Murphy 90

BETTING: 5-2 Bracey Run, 11-4 King On The Run, 4-1 Prospero, 7-1 Skycab, 10-1 Somovigun, 16-1 others.

1997: SEA VICTOR 5-11-4 D Gallagher (2-1 fav) J L Harris 10 ran

1.30 SUNBURY NOVICES CHASE (£3,550: 3m) (4 runners)

201 2111212 NORTHERN STARLIGHT 29 (F,G,S) (A Soucy) M Pipe 7-12-0 J Lower 120
202 3-1231 OCCULO 29 (G,S) (G Hubbard) G Hubbard 7-11-10 R Thornton 150
203 1241U2 ESCALESKI EQUIMARE 25 (G,S) (L Wilson) N Henderson 7-11-5 M A Fitzgerald [illegible]
204 P531-4F LOTTERY TICKET 23 (G,S) (A Pickett) T George 9-11-5 G Wyner 110

BETTING: 11-10 Northern Starlight, 2-1 Escaleski Equimare, 5-1 Occulo, 8-1 Lottery Ticket.

1997: FINE THYNE 8-11-12 M A Fitzgerald (4-11 fav) Mrs A Perrett 4 ran

2.05 SHEPPERTON HANDICAP HURDLE C4
(£4,299: 2m 5f) (15 runners)

301 /12112- BIG STRAND 296 (D,F,G,S) (C Jones) M Pipe 9-12-0 J Evans 143
302 422-230 FAR DAWN 69 (F,G) (P Wagner) Mrs A Perrett 5-11-7 R Dunwoody 137
303 43400- TOP SPIN 296 (CD,F,G,S) (Mrs C Dent) J Jenkins 8-11-4 B Powell 143
304 1F12-0 GIOT'S LUCY 1 (G,S) (Mrs J Dilsen) Mrs J Pitman 9-11-3 DOUBTFUL 139
305 423-15P MARIUS 29 (S) (Miss J Andrews) J Gifford 8-10-13 P Hide 144
306 1F-2342 EAU DE COLOGNE 29 (F,G-F,G) and M Evans) Mrs L Richards 6-10-12 M Richards 141
307 3-1212 TOBY BROWN 29 (G,S) (A Stewart & Mrs J Stewart) D Nicholson 5-10-11 R Thornton 143
308 /1-4304 DEYMAR 8 (G,S) (T Mitchell) G Gandolfo 6-10-10 G Bradley 139
309 /221-5 THREE FARTHINGS 28 (CD,S) (Hours of Fun) P Green J Old 6-10-8 M A Fitzgerald [illegible]
310 /61-222 WORLD EXPRESS 28 (B,D,F,S) (Dragons Prints) B Millman 8-10-5 D Salter (5) 150
311 /00-561 BOBINGE 9 (F,G) (C Rawlins) J Neville 9-10-4 X Aizpuru (3) 139
312 5-1P13 VITAMIN E 16 (G) (Landseer Ltd) Mrs J Pitman 8-10-3 DOUBTFUL 139
313 20-1113 BROWNES HILL LAD 24 (G,S) (Mrs S Merchant) R D Sullivan 8-10-3 A Thornton 143
314 225-212 HANEY LASS 23 (F,G,S) (S Hocking) J Smith 9-10-3 Mr D McPhail (7) 139
315 F343-FP SEOD RIOGA 23 (D,F,G,S) (J Trodd) S Mellor 9-10-0 C Webb (5) 127

BETTING: 3-1 Three Farthings, 5-1 Toby Brown, 6-1 World Express, 8-1 Deymar, Eau De Cologne, Robinges, 10-1 Big Strand, Hands Lass, 14-1 Far Dawn, 16-1 others.

1997: STORM DUST 8-10-1 S Fortune (25-1) Miss H Knight 13 ran

FORM FOCUS: Big Strand 3l 2nd of 17 to Escaleigue in handicap hurdle at Aintree (3m 110yd, good), with Top Spin (11lb better off) a distance 12th. Far Dawn 19l 8th of 17 to Mr Percy in handicap hurdle at Cheltenham (3m 110yd, good). Eau De Cologne 23l 2nd of 6 to Spring Rhythm in handicap hurdle at Windsor (2m 6f 110yd, good to soft). Toby Brown 5l 2nd of 6 to Hale Dancing in handicap hurdle at Kempton (2m 110yd, soft). Deymar 17l 4th of 15 to Tempetoe in handicap hurdle at Kempton (2m 110yd, soft). Three Farthings beat Royal Piper 2½l in 7-runner handicap hurdle at Kempton (2m 6f, soft). World Express 4l 2nd of 6 to Sadler's Realm in handicap hurdle at Chepstow (2m 110yd, heavy), previously 3l 2nd of 14 to Ice's Flutter in handicap hurdle at Windsor (2m 6f 110yd, good), with Eau De Cologne (1lb better off) 3½l 3rd and Robinges (5lb worse off) 6l 4th. Robinges beat Topchanmoifnothing 6l in 8-runner handicap hurdle at Marrakeburgh (3m, good to soft). Brownes Hill Lad 2½l 2nd of 15 to Kalco Associates in novice hurdle at Warwick (2m, soft). Handy Lass 5l 2nd of 7 to Sadler's Realm in handicap hurdle at Exeter (2m 3f 110yd, heavy). Seod Rioga pulled up in handicap chase at Windsor (3m, good to soft)

BROWNES HILL LAD is underrated at this sort of trip and should go well

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BROWNES HILL LAD is underrated at this sort of trip and should go well

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS	Wins	Rides	%	JOCKEYS	Winners	Rides	%
Mrs A Perrett	8	7	43.9	A Thornton	7	28	25.0
P Webber	5	12	38.5	R Dunwoody	16	88	18.2
G Gandolfo	8	22	36.4	M A Fitzgerald	20	112	17.9
B Millman	3	9	33.3	P Hide	7	56	12.5
R Alner	11	37	29.7	P Holley	4	33	12.1
P Dalton	3	11	27.3	M Richards	3	37	8.1

2.35 TWICKENHAM NOVICES CHASE C4
(£4,765: 2m) (5 runners)

401 -211112 KADASTROF 14 (BF,CD,G,S) (A Peters) R Dickin 8-11-11 A Thornton [illegible]
402 38-3321 MORSTOCK 8 (CD,G,S) (Mrs M Fairbairn) R Hodges 8-11-7 Y Dascombe 125
403 0/4 FLORLESS GUY 66 (M Sampson) R Rowe 10-11-3 B Fenton –
404 5/000-0 STOMPIN 33 (D,F,G,S) (M Broughton) Miss H Knight 7-11-3 J Culloty 119
405 /28-334 THE LAND AGENT 14 (S) (D Bare) J Mullins 7-11-3 M A Fitzgerald 107

BETTING: 10-11 Kadastrof, 3-1 Morstock, 4-1 Stompin, 10-1 The Land Agent, 25-1 Florless Guy.

1997: LAND AFAR 10-11-7 J Osborne (5-4 fav) P R Webber 5 ran

FORM FOCUS: Kadastrof 8l¼l 3rd of 8 to Monsieur Forte in handicap chase at Sandown (2m, good to soft). Morstock beat Robins Pride 1¼l in 8-runner handicap chase at Kempton (2m, soft). Stompin 1½l 2nd of 8 to Gale Force in novice chase at Ludlow (2m, good). The Land Agent beaten a distance 4th of 8 to Cyfor Mafia in novice chase at Sandown (2m 4f 110yd, good to soft)

KADASTROF has to be the pick but The Land Agent promises to improve

3.10 TOTE LANZAROTE HANDICAP HURDLE C4
(£16,988: 2m) (10 runners)

501 312-3P5 DOCTOOR 28 (D,G) (A Wells & Miss K Whitehead) M Pipe 8-11-10 J Evans 152
502 -225114 NEW INN 7 (D,F,G,S) (I Sinclair) S Gollings 7-11-10 R Thornton 140
503 1F60-11 SERENUS 29 (CD,G,S) (W, M & Mrs E Robins) N Henderson 5-11-9 M A Fitzgerald 158
504 /11-112 NAHRAWALI 43 (D,F,G) (C Spencedent) G L Moore 7-11-6 R Dunwoody 154
505 112-0P5 CARLITO BRIGANTE 24 (D,F,G,S) (B Pocklington) P R Webber 8-11-7 B Powell 152
506 11-43 ALABANG 49 (D,G) (Elan Racing Club) Miss J A Camacho 7-11-6 B Bradley 154
507 01-2414 DR BONES 29 (BF,D,G,S) (Mrs A Fortune) F Murphy 5-11-2 Mr D McPhail (7) 149
508 6132-11 NIPPER REED 7 (D,G,S) (G Fox) R Simpson 8-11-1 X Aizpuru (3) [illegible]
509 P0-2116 EASY LISTENING 63 (D,G,S) (D Rae) N Henderson 6-11-1 A Thornton 143
510 2F-4113 SHAHRUR 29 (D,F,G) (Mrs E Kenan) G L Moore 5-10-9 J R Kavanagh 150

BETTING: 5-1 Serenus, 7-2 Alabang, 4-1 Nahrawali, 6-2 Nipper Reed, 10-1 New Inn, Shahrur, 12-1 others.

1997: MAKE A STAND 6-10-3 A P McCoy (2-1 fav) M Pipe 12 ran

FORM FOCUS: Serenus beat Tibetan 2½l in 7-runner handicap hurdle at Kempton (2m, soft) with Doctoor (8lb better off) 43l 5th. Nahrawali 1½l 2nd of 21 to Major Jamie in handicap hurdle at Sandown (2m 110yd, good) with Alabang (1lb better off) 31¼l 3rd. New Inn (1lb worse off) 11l 5th and Carlito Brigante (6lb better off) pulled up. Nipper Reed beat Cadogoldi 2½l in 14-runner handicap hurdle at Ascot (2m 110yd, soft) with New Inn (2lb better off) 8l 4th. Easy Listening 5¾l 6th of 8 to Good Vibes in handicap hurdle at Aintree (2m 110yd, good to soft). Shahrur 12l 3rd of 7 to Erintante in novice hurdle at Kempton (2m, soft).

SERENUS has been well handled by Nicky Henderson and can complete the treble

3.40 FOLWELL HANDICAP CHASE C4
(£7,531: 2m 4f 110yd) (10 runners)

601 103042 STATELY HOME 9 (D,F,G) (P Bowen) P Bowen 7-12-0 R Dunwoody 138
602 5/1152- EASY BUCK 710 (D,F,G,S) (J & J Cook) C Morlock 11-11-11 P Holley –
603 33F-FU5 AARDWOLF 49 (B,G,S) (Lady Camilla Dempster) C Brooks 7-11-8 G Bradley 130
604 1F0-21F PRATE BOX 59 (D,G,S) (Exors of J Corbett) P Chamings 8-11-0 A Thornton 141
605 -223615 MONKS SOHAM 23 (D,G,S) (G Hobbard) G Hobbard 10-10-10 R Thornton 130
606 U1-1U4F FRAZER ISLAND 28 (D,F,G,S) (Dr B Alexander) R Rowe 9-10-10 B Fenton 144
607 229-P54 EASTHORPE 43 (F,G,S) (M Broughton) Miss H Knight 10-10-10 M A Fitzgerald 143
608 -040054 GREENBACK 14 (CD,F,G,S) (J Joseph) P Hobbs 7-10-10 L Harvey 147
609 2264P-0 MONTECOT 29 (S) (Sir Michael Connell) S Mellor 9-10-5 B Powell 137
610 63/1/13 EVEN FLOW 24 (BF,CD,F,G,S) (A Wales) T Casey 9-10-0 T J Murphy [illegible]

BETTING: 9-2 Even Flow, 6-1 Prate Box, 8-1 Monks Soham, Stately Home, 7-1 Frazer Island, Montecot, 8-1 others.

1997: DARRYLOUGH 8-10-1 A Maguire (11-2) D Gandolfo 6 ran

FORM FOCUS: Stately Home 10l 2nd of 5 to Callsose Bay in chase at Wincanton (2m 5f, good to soft). Easy Buck 14l 2nd of 5 to Sound Man in chase grade 1 at Ascot (2m 3f 110yd, soft). Prate Box fell in handicap chase at Chepstow (2m 3f 110yd, soft), previously beat The Carrol Man 14l in handicap chase at Chepstow (2m 3f 110yd, good to soft). Monks Soham a distance 5th to Pete The Parson in handicap chase at Cheltenham (2m 5f, good to soft). Frazer Island fell in handicap chase at Kempton (3m, soft), previously 17l 4th to Thespal Warlor in chase at Sandown (3m 110yd, good) with Aardwolf (8lb worse off) 46l 5th. Even Flow 8l 3rd of 6 to Stormore in handicap chase at Warwick (2m 4f 110yd, good to soft)

FRAZER ISLAND has plenty of scope and can begin to make up for lost time

4.10 WEATHERBYS STARS OF TOMORROW OPEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE (£1,508: 2m) (22 runners)

1

هكذا من الإصل

'Their inexplicable love of the game will keep them coming and coming and paying and paying'

Owning up to a passion

The law of diminishing returns means that, in racing, it is not the peasants who are revolting

SIMON BARNES

Talking horse

There is revolution stirring in our land. We live in a time of unrest. There is rebellion in the air. Everywhere, we see the rich readying themselves: prepared to rise up against their oppressors, the poor.

First voice in the revolution was that of Sheikh Mohammed. Speaking through a minion, as sheikhs are prone to do, he announced his readiness to abandon British racing, because the division of the money was manifestly unfair to sheikhs. It was, he or his minion said, the Government's fault.

The Government did not tremble, but racing certainly did. And then came further voices crying out for revolution. The British Horseracing Board (BHB) announced a plan for racing. Its basic requirement was that the Government take less tax from betting, and give it to racehorse owners.

The announcement of this plan was preceded by the resignation of the head of the BHB, Lord Wakeham. With all these rulers and aristocrats everywhere, it seems like a Shakespearean play; one of the duller histories. And at the centre of all the trouble, we have Peter Savill, a member of the BHB and chairman of the Racehorse Owners' Association.

Now I have noticed in the course of research for this column that there are only two classes of people who are completely irrational on the subject of horses. These are (a) the people that own horses and (b) the people who do not own horses.

Of this latter class, many have a vague and irrational hostility to the the former class. If you doubt this, ask why animal activists choose to disrupt hunting, rather than shooting. Shooting kills far more animals; but disrupting a hunt gives the atavistic joy of turning on a mounted human. Hunt disruption is not so much animal protection as a continuation of the class war: a re-enactment of the peasant's revolts of Jack Cade and Wat Tyler.

But that is enough of irrational hate. Let us turn instead to irrational love: Savill presents his financial plan for racing as a piece of good, sound, fair financial logic. And so it is, and certainly fairer than giving all the money to bookmakers.

Savill is not a sheikh, but his chances of paying the mortgage this month look good. He is worth around £40 million. He made the money himself, from running a stable of those glossy, unreadable magazines that you find in hotels and cruise ships.

"I decided a long time ago that if I ever made any money, I would spend it all on horses," Savill said. Perhaps you wonder why. Horses do not bring you money, or power, or sex, or good things to eat and drink. They do not give you loyalty and affection of the kind you get from humans and dogs. All that is clear about horses is that those who own them cannot think of living without them.

I cannot talk to millionaires about money, or social life, or politics. There is not ground on which we can meet on such a subject. But it took precisely 30 seconds for Savill and I to fall deep into conversation. The key word, you see, is "horse".

"She was called Marushka, and in her first three races she beat a total of two horses out of about 80. That was because in one race, one of the runners pulled up lame. In another, she beat the last horse by a short head."

That was the first horse Savill owned, back in 1977. "It was the best possible start. You get a good horse for your first, and you are doomed. You are spoilt for life. Now the first winner I ever had was Celtic Halo, and we won at Catterick." Clearly Savill is in it for the glamour.

"I love the little tracks just as much as the big ones. I couldn't get to the race. I was in Paris, but I listened to it on the telephone." He listened to the old Extel blower commentary, the glorious toneless tones that thrilled and dismayed a million punting hearts.

"They go past together," the voice would whine, as if unaware of the anguish and delight the announcement would provoke across the country and beyond its shores. "Photograph, Catterick."

"He called Celtic Halo's name second, and I slammed the phone down knowing he had lost. But I checked the result three hours later ..." And the joys and the keys to a kingdom were his.

The joy, can you imagine the joy? Either you can or you can't. Can you explain why a man would give all he has for one woman and not for another? It is not a rational matter.

Savill has regularly had up to 50 horses in training in this country at one time; these days (because of the terrible prize-money) he has cut down to about 30, with a dozen and a half more in France (better prize-money) and Ireland. His best horse was Celtic Swing, a brilliant two-year-old who went on to finish second in the 2,000 Guineas and win the French Derby. Some might argue, though, that the best was really Chaplin's Club, who once went for nine races in 18 days and won seven of them. "If the box came into the yard and left without him, he would turn to the wall and sulk," Savill said.

Savill was in the Pony Club and he hated it. But he fell in with the point-to-pointers at Cambridge and loved everything, without making the terrible mistake of getting onto a horse's back.

Loves a bet, of course. "Well — say five figures. Though I only have a serious bet on one of my own horses. I love it. I just love it, the thrill of it, the camaraderie. Racing is the only sport in the world in which you can participate, spectate and socialise all at the same time."

Doing the entries — that is to say, putting the right horse in the right race at the right time — is one of the key skills of the racehorse trainer. Savill insists on doing his own entries. Basically, Savill cannot get enough of it. And it costs him half a million a year.

And don't call it a hobby, not unless you want to hear a long set-piece about racing politics. "Just because you get pleasure out of it doesn't mean it is not a business."

But the real point is that nobody who is not a horse owner has sympathy for horse owners. Perhaps they are right: it is our own silly fault. There is no question about it, the division of money in racing is deeply and rather vindictively unfair. Back to atavistic resentment.

But the obvious fact that something is unfair won't stop governments doing it. Governments reckon that the poor are always with us, and so are racehorse owners. Racing owners are not rational. Their deep, inexplicable love of the game will keep them coming and coming and paying and paying. It will all go wrong in the end, of course, but not in the next five years. Governments rather hank on that.

GERRY CRANHAM

Savill leads in Celtic Swing, the best horse he has owned, after winning the Prix du Jockey-Club (French Derby) at Chantilly in 1995

'I decided a long time ago that if I ever made any money, I would spend it all on horses'

Istabraq can pay fitting tribute to Durkan's memory

By Our Irish Racing Correspondent

ISTABRAQ, the Smurfit Champion Hurdle favourite, puts his championship claims to the test at Leopardstown tomorrow and it will be a great surprise if he is beaten.

Aidan O'Brien's charge, who faces six Irish-trained rivals in the £50,000 AIG Europe Champion Hurdle, will start at short odds to give his trainer a first success in the race.

However, the contest has been given an added poignancy by the death on Wednesday of John Durkan, who spotted Istabraq's jumping potential and who was preparing to train the horse until diagnosed with leukaemia in late 1996. Istabraq's owner, J. P. McManus, spoke for many when he said: "John was a lovely man whose courage was an inspiration to us all."

Durkan always took great pride in Istabraq's achievements, which include an unbroken run of eight successes over jumps since his debut in November 1996. Istabraq then finished runner-up to Noble Thyne, whom he faces again tomorrow, but useful though Noble Thyne is, Istabraq has developed into a different class of performer.

Istabraq's jockey, Charlie Swan, was confident yesterday. "He should win," he said. "We couldn't be happier with him and he is fit enough. He is not going to be 100 per cent until his main target, the English Champion Hurdle, but he is as forward as we want him to be."

The best of Istabraq's opponents look to be last year's AIG winner, Cockney Lad, and the promising novice, His Song, who is owned by Britain's Davis Cup captain, David Lloyd.

His Song won impressively at Leopardstown over Christmas, but the form has not been franked by the runner-up. Unarmed. The question remains whether His Song is mature enough to equal Danoli's performance in this race as a novice when second to Fortune And Fame.

Cockney Lad has twice finished runner-up to Istabraq this season and, although two miles around Leopardstown is ideal for Paul Carberry's mount, he should be denied by an in-form Istabraq. If the favourite fails to sparkle, though, Cockney Lad is the most likely to take advantage.

On the same card, the Baileys Arkle Chase has been robbed of much of its interest by the defection of Dardjini. The Noel Meade-trained horse, among the market leaders for Cheltenham's Arkle Trophy, has met with a slight setback, frustrating Meade, who viewed tomorrow's race as an ideal Festival preparation.

RICHARD EVANS

Nap: Bracey Run
(1.00 Kempton Park)

Bracey Run's third behind French Holly and Grey Shot at Sandown recently looks excellent form and Jim Old's well-regarded hurdler will relish today's longer trip and drop in class.

Next best: Sparkling Cone
(2.45 Haydock Park)

LEOPARDSTOWN TOMORROW BBC2

GOING: SOFT

2.45 AIG EUROPE CHAMPION HURDLE (Grade I: £34,500: 2m) (7 runners)

2111212 COCKNEY LAD 28 (BF,CD,F,G,S) (D Daly) N Meade 8-11-10 ..... P Carberry
111-111 ISTABRAQ 27 (CD,F,G,S) (J P McManus) A P O'Brien 6-11-10 ..... C F Swan
311-400 NOBLE THYNE 176 (C,D,G,S) (C Mayer) P Mullins 8-11-10 ..... G Bradley
60/5322 PUNTING PETE 27 (CD,F,S) (B Doyle) W P Mullins 8-11-10 ..... R Dunwoody
254-250 THEATREWORLD 15 (CD,S) (Mrs J Magnier) A P O'Brien 5-11-6 ..... N Williamson
1-1111 HIS SONG 29 (CD,G,S) (D Lloyd) M Morris 5-11-5 ..... R Hughes
3664-32 MOTCOMPLAINGEBUT 15 (CD,G,S) (Mrs C Moore) P Mullins 7-11-5 ..... T P Treacy

SETTINGS: 1-2 Istabraq, 7-1 Cockney Lad, His Song, 10-1 Theatreworld, 14-1 Motcomplaingebut, 16-1 Punting Pete, 25-1 Noble Thyne

1997 COCKNEY LAD 8-11-10 B Hughes (10-1) N Meade 7 ran

Magnolia Man returns

MAGNOLIA MAN, who won the Land Rover hunter chase final at Towcester last season, sets out in defence of that trophy at today's **Silverton** meeting in Devon (Carl Evans writes).

Magnolia Man, trained by Debbie Cole, is one of 18 entries for the men's open, a qualifier for the Towcester race. His rider, Neil Harris, acknowledges that the 12-year-old will benefit from the run and Still In Business is a more likely winner.

A feature at the **West Percy** tomorrow is the return of former northern area champion Kevin Anderson, 33, who has not ridden in public since this meeting two years ago when a fall resulted in a broken leg and severely damaged shoulder. He has four rides at the meeting, highlighted by Howayman in the men's open.

There is a quality entry at the **Point-To-Point Owners and Riders Club** meeting at Barbury Castle, where The Bounder and Grimley Gale make their seasonal debuts.

TODAY'S MEETINGS: Silverton (2.30) Forest Lodge, 4m S of Exeter (first race 12.00) TOMORROW: East Anglian Bloodhounds at Marks Tey, 5m W of Colchester (11.30), PPORC at Barbury Castle, 4m NW of Marlborough, (11.30), West Percy at Alnwick, 3m E of Alnwick (12.00)

CATTERICK

THUNDERER

1.10 Members Welcome. 1.40 Ham N'Eggs. 2.10 Centaur Express. 2.40 Sirenic. 3.15 Old Hush Wing. 3.45 Dragons Bay. 4.15 Tipping Tina.

GOING: SOFT (HEAVY IN PLACES) SIS

1.10 DARLINGTON CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS SELLING HANDICAP HURDLE (£2,010: 2m) (16 runners)

1 0/00 SALINGER 40 (D,G,S) J Parkes 10-11-10 ..... S Byrne
2 1223 ERICOLN 29 (V,D,F,G,S) Miss A Stelzer 8-11-4 .. E Husband
3 43-6 NOORAN 21 D Williams 7-10-12 ..... I Jardine (4)
4 4534 LORD OF THE RINGS 8 F Murphy 6-10-6 ..... B Harding
5 P53/ DRUMDONNA 639 P Beaumont 8-10-3 ..... M Mello (7)
6 5P-0 GONE AWAY 76 M Hammond 9-10-2 ..... A Ede (7)
7 4080 KIERCHEM 8 (CD,G,S) C Grant 7-10-1 ..... F Leahy
8 -002 ONE STOP 24 M Barnes 5-10-0 ..... S Taylor
9 00U4 HUTCHES LADY 17 R Mckellar 6-10-0 ..... G F Ryan
10 000 MEMBERS WELCOME 34 W Tinning 5-10-0 .... N Horrocks
11 5-PP HAWTINDOORKEY 29 (B) M Todhunter 8-10-0 .... C McCormack
12 3FP ANOTHER PICEA 28 A J Lockwood 5-10-0 .... L Cooper (4)
13 00PP POLITICAL MANDATE 21 R Nixon 5-10-0 ..... D Thomas
14 0F0F HYA PRIM 39 (B) N Chamberlain 7-10-0 ..... R McGrath
15 PF-0 POLAR WIND 29 N Waggott 9-10-0 ..... M Newton
16 -PPH REGAL JEST 29 B Murray 8-10-0 ..... L Carvelas

3-1 One Stop, 4-1 Ericolin, 6-1 Lord Of The Rings, 7-1 Nooran, 8-1 Hutches Lady, 12-1 Regal Jest, 14-1 Drumdonna, Kierchem, 16-1 others

1.40 BEDALE NOVICES CHASE (£2,843: 2m) (9)

1 6-41 HAM N'EGGS 29 (D,F,G,S) M Hammond 7-11-9 .. R Garritty
2 -UF6 APACHE RAIDER 25 F Murphy 6-11-3 ..... B Storey
3 -320 FORESTAL 49 (D,G,S) J H Johnson 6-11-3 ..... B Harding
4 73-4 HARFDECENT 85 (F) Mrs M Reveley 7-11-3 ..... P Niven
5 5P60 HICKSONS CHOICE 25 J Wade 10-11-3 ..... A S Smith
6 3P- BAUSTANKT 296P Mrs M Reveley 8-11-3 ..... N Smith
7 00/ LITTLE TUSKA 1071 N Mason 8-11-3 ..... R Guest
8 /14-4 LORD FORTUNE 68 (D,F) M Hammond 8-11-3 Mr C Bonner (3)
9 /0/4 SILLARS STALKER 28 (D,F,G,S) Mrs A Swinbank 10-11-3 J Supple

15-8 Ham N'Eggs, 9-4 Forestal, 7-2 Harfdecent, 7-1 Lord Fortune, 10-1 Sillars Stalker, 12-1 Apache Raider, 14-1 Baustankt, 25-1 others

2.10 LEYBURN HANDICAP HURDLE (£2,360: 2m) (12)

1 -606 CENTAUR EXPRESS 36 (S) A Stelzer 6-12-0 .. C McCormack (5)
2 3-36 BRAMBLES WAY 81 (CD,D,F,G,S) Mrs M Reveley 9-11-9 P Niven
3 41-4 IFALLELSEFAILS 25 (F,G,S) L Lungo 10-11-6 ..... W Dowling (7)
4 0322 FASSAN 23 (BF) M Hammond 6-11-4 ..... R Garritty
5 63F3 CONTRARRE 21 (F) A Whillans 6-11-1 ..... B Harding
6 -4P2 CATHERINE'S CHOICE 23 M Hammond 5-10-12 Mr C Bonner (3)
7 1-4P TANSEED 23 (CD,G,S) M Meagher 7-10-11 ..... D Byrne
8 1-4F WEEHERY 44 (D,G) Miss A Stelzer 9-10-10 ..... G Tormey
9 -005 SLEEPY RIVER 22 (D,G,S) J J O'Neill 7-10-6 ..... L Cooper (7)
10 6354 MENSHAAR 25 (G,S) L Lungo 6-10-1 ..... R Supple
11 -0F0 COURT JOKER 8 (G,S) H Alexander 6-10-0 ..... R McGrath (3)
12 P56/ MR ESLANTINE 656 A Smith 6-10-0 ..... M Horrocks (7)

4-1 Fassan, 5-1 Catherine's Choice, 6-1 Ifallelsefails, Centaurexpress, 7-1 Contrarre, Brambles Way, 10-1 Weeherry, Menshaar, 12-1 others

2.40 LEEMING HANDICAP CHASE (£3,808: 3m 1f 110yd) (15)

1 6-UP KALAJO 52 (D,F,S) L Lungo 8-11-10 ..... R Supple
2 2-51 WINTER BELLE 24 (CD,G) J H Johnson 10-11-10 Mr C Bonner (3)
3 121/ CARLEY LAD 676 (S) N Mason 10-11-10 .....
4 2223 PERUVIAN GALE 24 (CD,F,G) Mrs S Smith 9-11-5 ..... R Guest
5 -2P5 FLAT TOP 25 (S) M W Easterby 7-11-5 ..... B Garritty
6 P/63 HAG'S WAY 9 (S) M Todhunter 8-11-2 ..... C McCormack (5)
7 5351 DANDYS BONUS 28 (S) J Johnson 6-11-0 ..... P Niven
8 3-51 BRIGRIC 39 (S) S Gall 8-11-0 ..... M Smith
9 4041 FERN LEADER 17 (B,S) C Grant 6-10-10 ..... R McGrath (3)
10 -65P HEAVENLY CITIZEN 7 (B,CD,F,S) J Gledson 10-10-10 .. B Harding
11 362- TICO GOLD 290 (CD,S) Mrs J Brown 10-10-0 .. G Tormey
12 5-24 GOLD PIGEON 44 (CD,S) B Rothwell 9-10-7 ..... B Storey
13 -342 KARENASTINO 29 (CD,S) Mrs S Smith 7-10-4 R Wilkinson (5)
14 -33P DEISE MARSHALL 38 J Wade 10-10-1 ..... A S Smith
15 P2-6 MILWAUKEE 23 (S) T Etherington 9-10-0 ..... D Parker

9-2 Winter Belle, 7-1 Sirenic, 15-2 Dandys Bonus, 8-1 Peruvian Gale, Hag's Way, Fern Leader, 10-1 Carley Lad, Flat Top, Karenastino, 12-1 others

3.15 SWALE HURDLE (£2,598: 3m 1f 110yd) (23)

1 2211 BRIGDALE 29 (S) L Lungo 7-11-10 ..... R Supple
2 2514 GALEN 48 (BF,G) Mrs M Reveley 7-11-4 ..... P Niven
3 -123 GLENBOWER 29 (G) M Hammond 6-11-4 .. Mr C Bonner (3)
4 4-1R OLD HUSH WING 19F (BF,G) P Haslam 5-11-4 ..... M Foster
5 6405 ALIAS CHUBB 49 Mrs S Smith 7-10-12 ..... R Guest
6 -0 ALL THE GAS 37 Mrs A Naughton 7-10-12 .. Mr T J Barry (7)
7 006- BOUNDTOHONOUR 318 J H Johnson 6-10-12 ..... A S Smith
8 4056 COME ON SLUSH 37 J Upson 5-10-12 ..... W Dowling (7)
9 COOKED BREAKFAST J Retard 10-10-12 ..... M Moloney
10 4W FRICA 973F F Murphy 7-10-12 ..... G F Ryan (5)
11 FAIR FARM LAD J Jefferson 6-10-12 ..... D Byrne
12 1-0 FORREST TIREE 58 (S) M Hammond 5-10-12 ..... R Garritty
13 000- HANSEL'S STREAK 243 F Murtagh 6-10-12 ..... J Callaghan
14 LANACAN LANE Mrs A Swinbank 5-10-12 ..... J Supple
15 5/6 MASTER WOOD 25 C Grant 7-10-12 ..... R McGrath (3)
16 F OVER THE MASTER 25 J H Johnson 6-10-12 ..... D Parker
17 /1/P SHINING FOUNTAIN 29 (G,S) D M Forster 9-10-12 .. B Storey
18 3P-5 SILLY PET 29 C Pogson 8-10-12 ..... N Bentley
19 2 TINDLES BIBLE 29 M Todhunter 6-10-12 C McCormack (5)
20 6P BUSHMILLS 78 F Murtagh 5-10-7 ..... M Horrocks (7)
21 4F/3 GYPSY RACE 25 M W Easterby 8-10-7 ..... P Midgley (3)
22 6-40 OUR CAROL 23 J Parkes 8-10-7 ..... S Ryan (5)
23 P-P SEE MORE CASTLES 25 G A Hunter 7-10-7 ..... B Harding

4-1 Tindles Bible, 9-2 Old Hush Wing, 5-1 Brigdale, 6-1 Glenbower, 8-1 Forrest Tiree, 10-1 Galen, Gypsy Race, 16-1 others

3.45 SEAMER NOVICES HANDICAP CHASE (£3,402: 2m 3f) (15)

1 331U MINSTER GLORY 28 (C,F,G) M W Easterby 7-11-10 R Garritty
2 -30P STAGE FRIGHT 3 F Murphy 7-11-2 ..... M Foster
3 -244 BE BRAVE 29 (S) T Etherington 8-11-2 ..... D Parker
4 -012 DESERT BRAVE 28 (G) Mrs S Smith 8-11-2 ..... R Guest
5 -342 GLOBAL LEGEND 42 J H Johnson 8-10-13 ..... B Harding
6 6/23 BROADWATER BOY 28 M Hammond 10-10-12 Mr C Bonner (3)
7 1233 BOYZONTOOWA 21 (F) W Storey 6-10-8 ..... M Moloney
8 -531 CORBLEU 24 (CD,G) S Bell 8-10-8 ..... M Smith
9 P-62 DRAGONS BAY 34 Mrs M Reveley 8-10-6 ..... P Niven
10 -FPP DANTES AMOUR 25 E Alston 7-10-4 ..... L Cummins (5)
11 P-61 ARTHUR BEE 34 (C,G) R Beechey 11-10-4 C McCormack (5)
12 4F52 MENALDI 24 F Cheesbrough 8-10-2 ..... A S Smith
13 3P6- ANOTHER COMEDY 280 R Lee 8-10-2 ..... G Hogan (3)
14 P8-P MATACHON 23 M Smith 8-10-0 ..... J Supple
15 U-50 MR BRUNO 9 M Barnes 5-10-0 ..... S Taylor (5)

9-2 Dragons Bay, 5-1 Desert Brave, 6-1 Global Legend, Corbleu, 7-1 Be Brave, 8-1 Minster Glory, 10-1 Stage Fright, 12-1 others

4.15 CATTERICK MAIDEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE (£1,299: 2m) (21)

1 BIRGITEK BOY C Grant 5-11-10 ..... G Lee
2 5 COCLAW 46 F Murphy 5-11-10 ..... Mr P Murphy (7)
3 GUS CUNNINGHAM Mrs M Reveley 5-11-10 M Hermigton (7)
4 HECKLEY DANCER W McNamee 6-11-10 C McCormack (5)
5 60-0 JUSTLIKEJM 76 J L Harris 7-11-10 ..... M Griffiths (7)
6 REDSWAY N Mason 7-11-10 ..... G F Ryan (5)
7 SYLCAN EXPRESS C Grant 5-11-10 ..... F Leahy (3)
8 0 COLMARANN 29 Mrs S Smyth 6-11-5 ..... Mr J Saville (7)
9 2 FLUTTERBY LADY 17 L Lungo 5-11-5 ..... W Dowling (7)
10 0-0 GEM OF HOLLY 61 R Wood 5-11-5 ..... Mr C Mulhall
11 4 KALAH SCAMP 61 J Parkes 5-11-5 ..... S Ryan (5)
12 LADY ARDER J Bridget 7-11-5 ..... Mr R Hale
13 PAPERBACK WRITER G White 6-11-5 ..... S Melrose (7)
14 0-0 SWIFTLY SUPREME 75 T Cuthbert 5-11-5 .. Mr T Davidson (7)
15 2 THORTERDYKES LASS 21 A Whillans 5-11-5 ..... B Harding
16 TIPPING TINA W Storey 5-11-5 ..... R McGrath (3)
17 00 WOODY SCUD 38 J Pickering 6-11-5 ..... D Berrows (5)
18 MAJOR TOM T Tate 4-10-12 ..... L Cooper (7)
19 ROCKY MY BOY Mrs S Smith 4-10-12 ..... R Wilkinson (5)
20 ALU-LADY M W Easterby 4-10-7 ..... P Midgley (3)
21 AULBY F Murtagh 4-10-7 ..... M Horrocks (7)

5-1 Coclaw, 7-2 Flutterby Lady, 9-2 Thorterdykes Lass, 7-1 Gus Cunningham, 10-1 Kalah Scamp, 14-1 Alu-Lady, 16-1 Birgitek Boy, Sylcan Express, 20-1 others

LINGFIELD PARK

THUNDERER

1.25 Tangerine Flyer. 1.55 Sihafi. 2.25 Private Despatch. 2.55 King's Colours. 3.30 Impulsive Decision. 4.00 Royal Ceilidh.

GOING: STANDARD DRAW: 5F-1M, LOW BEST SIS

1.25 CRUSADER CLAIMING STAKES (3-Y-O: £2,169: 5f) (3 runners)

1 01-1 TANGERINE FLYER 21 (CD) J Berry 9-3 P Roberts (3) 2
2 4-32 DANCE TIMES 14 (B,BF) K Ivory 9-7 ..... Martin Dwyer 3
3 300- FAIRY DOMINO 37 (D,S) M Quinn 8-2 ..... A Whelan 1

2-5 Tangerine Flyer, 5-2 Dance Times, 14-1 Fairy Domino

1.55 COMET HANDICAP (£2,832: 6f) (9)

1 2-11 TIME TO FLY 10 (B,D) B Murray 6-8-12 .. D Sweeney (3) 9
2 0-51 SIHAFI 9 (CD) D Nicholls 5-9-10 ..... Alex Greaves 3
3 2532 HALF TONE 9 (B,C,F,G,S) R Flower 6-9-9 ..... S Sanders 8
4 3-50 IVOR'S DEED 9 (B,BF,C,F,G) Miss G Kelleway 5-9-4 K Fallon 1
5 52-6 GOODBYE GATEMISH 11 (G) B Pearce 4-8-10 C Lowther (3) 5
6 -606 GI LA HIGH 10 (B,C) M Meade 5-8-8 Dean McKeown 7
7 040- OXBANE 51 C Dwyer 4-8-4 ..... A Clark 2
8 342- STATISTICIAN 152 (E,D,F) John Berry 6-7-13 ..... J Lowe 4
9 0-60 OUR SHADES 16 (V,CD,F,G) K Ivory 8-7-10 Martin Dwyer 6

7-2 Sihafi, 4-1 Time To Fly, Half Tone, 5-1 Ivor's Deed, 10-1 Goodbye Gatemish, Oxbane, 12-1 Gi La High, Statistician, Our Shades

2.25 CHURCHILL CLAIMING STAKES (£2,712: 1m 2f) (7)

1 04-3 ERRANT 14 (CD) D Cosgrove 6-8-12 ..... M Rimmer 6
2 15 RETURN OF THE MAC 11 (C) M Bosley 6-8-12 R Studholme (7) 2
3 3-53 FATHER DAN 9 (CD,F,G) Miss G Kelleway 9-8-9 J Wilkinson (5) 7
4 00/0 NEVER GOLF CLASSIC 14 T Naughton 5-8-9 ..... S Sanders 4
5 02-2 AWESOME POWER 23 (CD,G) J Hills 12-8-6 ..... A Clark 1
6 211- PRIVATE DESPATCH 74 (D,S) J Mackie (Bel) 8-8-6 S Whitworth 5
7 000- ALPINE MUSIC 140 J Mullins 4-8-4 ..... S Righton (7) 3

9-4 Awesome Power, 5-2 Private Despatch, 7-2 Father Dan, 5-1 Errant, 10-1 Return Of The Mac, 20-1 Alpine Music, 25-1 Never Golf Classic

2.55 CHIEFTAIN MAIDEN STAKES (3-Y-O: £2,766: 1m) (6)

1 4 BIN FAA 16 Dr J Scargill 9-0 ..... G Bardwell 5
2 03-4 FLAME TOWER 18 R Hannon 9-0 ..... Dane O'Neill 4
3 486- GREAT MELODY 112 D Cosgrove 9-0 ..... M Rimmer 3
4 0- KING'S COLOURS 125 (B) J Noseda 9-0 ..... G Carter 2
5 666- LOBUCHE 111 R Hannon 9-0 ..... P Dobbs (7) 6
6 LUCKY ME M Tompkins 9-0 ..... D Biggs 1

5-2 Flame Tower, 11-4 King's Colours, 7-2 Lucky Me, 5-1 Bin Faa, 8-1 others.

3.30 CHALLENGER HANDICAP (3-Y-O: £3,388: 1m) (8)

1 01-1 DIAMOND DRILL 11 (CD) P Makin 9-7 ..... A Clark 8
2 1-12 BLUE SHADOW 11 (C) R Hannon 9-4 ..... P Dobbs (7) 2
3 4-12 IMPULSIVE DECISION 14 (BF,CD,G) M Meade 9-0 K Fallon 4
4 31-0 BALI DANCE 23 (C) C Booth 8-13 ..... A McCarthy (7) 1
5 0U-3 BOULEVARD ROUGE 17 M Johnston 8-10 Dean McKeown 5
6 02-3 COMEOUTOFTHEFOG 11 D French Davis 8-1 ..... S Drowne 3

2-1 Diamond Drill, 3-1 Blue Shadow, 9-2 Impulsive Decision, 6-1 others.

4.00 CENTURION HANDICAP (£2,752: 1m 4f) (9)

1 0-04 ROYAL CEILIDH 7 (F,G) D Williams 5-10-0 D Griffiths (3) 1
2 4-53 SILANKKA 5 (BF) M Channon 4-9-13 ..... R Perham 5
3 2/10/ SOCIETY GIRL 173J (F,G,S) J O'Shea 5-9-13 Martin Brdin (7) 8
4 34-5 REHAAB 14 (V,C,F) Miss B Sanders 5-9-10 ..... A Clark 3
5 /10 MISS ROBERTO 35J (V,BF,S) J O'Shea 5-9-9 A McCarthy (7) 7
6 100- STRONG CHOICE 51J (G) J Mullins 6-9-7 ..... S Righton (7) 4
7 50-0 SUEU WHALLIAN 7 R Hannon 4-9-6 ..... Dane O'Neill 9
8 30-3 HARLEQUIN WALK 14 (CD,F,G) R O Sullivan 7-9-2 .. S Sanders 2
9 00-3 CABCHARGE GLORY 14 T Clement 4-8-3 ..... J Gotobed (7) 6

2-1 Harlequin Walk, 11-4 Rehaab, 6-1 Silankka, Cabcharge Glory, 12-1 Royal Ceilidh, 14-1 Society Girl, Miss Roberto, Sueu Whallian, 25-1 Strong Choice

COURSE SPECIALISTS

LINGFIELD PARK: Trainers: D Nicholls, 12 winners from 57 runners, 21.1%; J Berry, 30 from 150, 20.0%; M Johnston, 50 from 273, 18.3%; Miss G Kelleway, 35 from 206, 17.0%. Jockeys: R Studholme, 4 winners from 11 rides, 36.4%; K Fallon, 14 from 49, 28.6%; P Dobbs, 4 from 18, 22.2%; Alex Greaves, 8 from 38, 21.1%.

CATTERICK: Trainers: A Streeter, 7 winners from 23 runners, 30.4%; F Murtagh, 4 from 17, 23.5%; Mrs M Reveley, 18 from 79, 22.8%; Mac A Swinbank, 4 from 21, 19.0%. Jockeys: P Niven, 24 winners from 77 rides, 31.2%; A S Smith, 13 from 70, 18.6%; J Callaghan, 10 from 62, 16.1%; M Moloney, 5 from 32, 15.6%.

WOLVERHAMPTON

THUNDERER

7.00 Prince Ashleigh. 7.30 Chemcast. 8.00 Whitley Grange Boy. 8.30 Sualtach. 9.00 State Approval. 9.30 Charlie Chang.

GOING: STANDARD DRAW: NO ADVANTAGE

7.00 M C S D RACING MAIDEN STAKES (3-Y-O: £2,960: 1m 1f 79yd) (11 runners)

1 BRIAN'S BLUE P Eccles 9-0 ..... D Sweeney (3) 4
2 343- HEATHYARDS SHEIK 42 R Hollinshead 9-0 ..... F Lynch 3
3 00-0 LANDRFUN 17 H Collingridge 9-0 ..... M Rimmer 10
4 MIRACLE ISLAND D Loder 9-0 ..... G Faulkner (5) 9
5 5-23 PRINCE ASHLEIGH 14 (BF) P Haslam 9-0 ..... C Lowther (3) 5
6 ASHLEIGH BAKER A Bailey 8-9 ..... K Hodgson 8
7 34-5 BUNNIES DWN 15 J L Harris 8-9 ..... R Winston (5) 1
8 50-0 FROLICKING 3 N Littmoden 8-9 ..... S Whitworth 11
9 HIGHLAND FLING M Johnston 8-9 ..... D Holland 7
10 006- MAMILE'S PENSION 56 A Bailey 8-9 ..... D Wright 2
11 00- WROUGHT IRON 103 M Bell 8-9 ..... M Fenton 6

2-1 Prince Ashleigh, 7-2 Miracle Island, 11-2 Heathyards Sheik, 6-1 Highland Fling, 10-1 Wrought Iron, 12-1 Bunnies Dwn, 16-1 Ashleigh Baker, 20-1 others.

7.30 SYCAMORE CLAIMING STAKES (£1,738: 5f) (10)

1 138- VILLAGE NATIVE 29 (B,CD,F) K C-Brown 5-10-0 .. A Clark 6
2 2-21 ALJAZ 10 (CD,S) Guy Kelleway 6-9-10 ..... Dane O'Neill 10
3 0-63 CHEMCAST 10 (B,D,F,G) J Eyre 5-9-10 ..... R Lappin 3
4 4-23 FEATHERSTONE LANE 10 (CD,F) L Siddall 7-9-10 D McKeown 9
5 5-62 MULLAGH HILL LAD 8 (B,CD) N Littmoden 5-9-10 S Whitworth 4
6 00-0 BOFFY 10 (CD,F,G) B Baugh 5-9-8 ..... R Studholme (7) 5
7 0-0 ISHMAEL 14 (B) B Llewellyn 5-9-6 ..... D Sweeney (3) 1
8 00-0 MAKE READY 18 (D) J Neville 4-9-1 ..... S Drowne 7
9 000- HAYMAD STREET 141 (D,G) P Evans 5-8-13 A McCarthy (7) 8
10 000- REDSPET 71 (B) S Bowring 4-8-13 ..... C Teague (3) 2

5-2 Aljaz, 5-1 Mullagh Hill Lad, 7-2 Chemcast, Featherstone Lane, 9-1 others.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS: D Loder, 9 winners from 27 runners, 33.3%; Mrs M Reveley, 14 from 58, 24.1%; M Bell, 14 from 64, 21.9%; M Johnston, 53 from 244, 21.7%; P Eccles, 4 from 19, 21.1%.

JOCKEYS: S Righton, 3 winners from 15 rides, 20.0%; D Sweeney, 13 from 71, 18.3%; G Faulkner, 6 from 34, 17.6%; O Pears, 5 from 30, 16.7%; D Holland, 20 from 128, 15.6%; M Rimmer, 6 from 40, 15.0%.

8.00 PINE HANDICAP (£2,762: 2m 46yd) (8)

1 00-1 MISTER ASPECTO 8 (V,D,F) M Johnston 5-9-10 .. D Holland 6
2 4/1- FATHER SKY 42J (B,D,F,G,S) O Sherwood 7-9-2 K Fallon 3
3 33-1 WHITLEY GRANGE BOY 15 (D,S) J Eyre 5-9-0 L Charnock 2
4 3-02 PREMIER DANCE 10 (CD,F) D Jones 11-8-13 Joe Richards (7) 8
5 03-1 NOUFARI 19 (C,D,G) R Hollinshead 7-8-12 ..... F Lynch 5
6 /5-2 MONDRAGON 15 (D,F,G) Mrs M Reveley 8-8-7 .. A Culhane 4
7 300- MR SPECULATOR 46J (B,C,F) J Spearing 5-7-11 S Righton (7) 1
8 550- CASTLE SECRET 37J (CD,F) D Burchell 12-7-10 A McCarthy (7) 7

11-4 Father Sky, 4-1 Mondragon, 9-2 Noufari, 6-1 Whitley Grange Boy, 13-2 Mister Aspecto, 7-1 Premier Dance, 10-1 Castle Secret, 20-1 Mr Speculator

8.30 S.J. DIXON HANDICAP (£2,710: 1m 100yd) (8)

1 100- PERICLES 84 (C,S) Gay Kelleway 4-10-0 ..... K Fallon 6
2 1-14 PLAN FOR PROFIT 7 (D,F,G) M Johnston 4-9-13 Dean McKeown 1
3 20-0 BRUTAL FANTASY 15 (C,F,G) J Eyre 4-9-11 ..... O Pears 4
4 4-11 FAYIR 7 4 Newcombe 4-9-7 ..... T Williams 8
5 5-21 SUALTACH 10 (C,D,F,S) R Hollinshead 5-9-7 ..... F Lynch 3
6 40-1 JIBEREEN 22 (C,D,F,G,S) P Howling 6-9-6 ..... S Whitworth 5
7 2-34 TROJAN HERO 8 (C,D,F) Mrs M Reveley 7-8-13 ..... A Culhane 2
8 00-5 SUEZ TORNADO 10 (D,G,S) E Alston 5-8-12 ..... C Lowther (3) 7

3-1 Plan For Profit, 7-2 Fayir, 4-1 Pericles, 5-1 Sualtach, 7-1 Jibereen, 12-1 Brutal Fantasy, Trojan Hero, 14-1 Suez Tornado

9.00 LIME SELLING STAKES (£1,738: 1m 4f) (5)

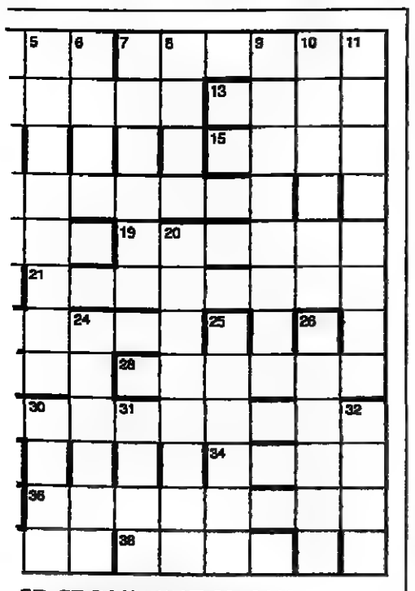
1 00-1 STATE APPROVAL 14 (CD,F) S Wilton 5-9-9 .. S Whitworth 1
2 00-4 FAILED TO HIT 10 (B,F) N Littmoden 5-9-4 Dane O'Neill 3
3 /64- WADADA 10U (F) D Burchell 7-9-4 D Sweeney (3) 4
4 -342 HEAD GARDENER 8 (B) N Littmoden 4-9-0 A Daly (3) 2
5 220- PORTITE SOPHIE 94 (C) M Brittain 7-9-13 D Mernagh (7) 5

1-2 State Approval, 5-1 Head Gardener, 7-1 Portite Sophie, 12-1 Failed To Hit, 16-1 Wadada.

9.30 NICK LITTMODEN OWNERS HANDICAP (£2,414:

THE LISTENER CROSSWORD

No 3446: Not Playing Fair by Waterloo



THE playfair code uses a five by five square in which the 26 letters of the alphabet are arranged (I and J share the same square). The first squares are taken up by a codeword in which no letter is repeated, and the rest of the alphabet follows in the normal order. To encode a word, you divide it into pairs of letters and consider each pair separately. If the two letters of a pair appear in the same column, the letters below them are used. If the two letters appear in the same row, the letters to the right of them are used. Both column and row are considered as loops, so the letter below the bottom of a column is taken to be the top letter in the column, and the letter to the right of the end of a row is considered to be the first letter in that row. Where the letters appear in different columns and rows, the squares in which they appear are taken to be the opposite corners of a rectangle, and the coded version consists of the letters in the other two corners; if the upper letter is first in the word to be encoded, the upper corner is taken first in the coded version, and if not the lower corner is used first.

U	N	F	A	I
R	E	S	T	B
C	D	G	H	K
L	M	O	P	Q
V	W	X	Y	Z

OU TR AG ED

LF BE FH DM

In this crossword the answers to four clues have to be encoded before being entered. The necessary codeword has to be deduced. Each of twelve of the other clues contains a group of letters which appears too be a word (or in one case two words) but is actually code, using the same Playfair codeword. These words have to be decoded before the clues can be properly solved.

ACROSS
3 Duma back to hold armadillo (4)
7 Recklessly go in for exercise round open space (6)
12 'Bodily' gives right note in very severe environment (5)
13 Last bits of fresh pina, stale meal and last bit of bread (4)
14 Encounter wader when sun is gone (4)
15 Auld arrangement for having no feudal superior in Orkney (4)
16 Add a chemical — foul mixture removed and consumed (10)
17 Attracts models the French rejected (6)
19 Confused top ten introduction to 'Lumbered' (6)
21 Last of vats, heady and telling (5)
22 Idols half African group got together by railway (8)
27 Where coaches stop without — frolic (6)
28 Unexpected cracks gone, first and last: curtailed bliss reformed (6)
29 Perverse deal with sadism and footwear (10)
33 Sportsman loses head where colours are eliminated (4)
34 Close main line (4)
35 Go for tailless anteiope (4)
36 Mark indicates flower is head of knapweed (8)
37 Suits about rupees left for old maids (6)
38 Merganser take piece of mine then moult (4)

DOWN
1 Inclined to make jokes which would be cleaner with second half first (4)
2 Humour, Napier's first failing, came before serine (6)
4 Precludes waif getting back tablets to begin with (6)
5 Scottish jasp for elder queen, perhaps, taking in roundabout tour with king (8)
6 Perk obtained, heart only opposed (4)
7 Barbados pride, for instance, is with nearly everything (6)
8 Essence of arrest for pot (4)
9 Italian dish served to the Spanish in Italy (8)
10 Arrange antennae without an upset (6)
11 Says everything's outside in (8)
17 Woolly beetle possibly has to excavate one (8)
18 Two rivers covered by inverted marine plant (8)
20 Fancy has forsaken hamadryades dancing (8)
23 Any tropical tree, palm included, involved in perception of sound (6)
24 Heartless fellow comes back about a thousand pieces (8)
25 Apparently plan means Sean gathered in effect (6)
26 Vestment held upside down by godless setter alight (6)
30 Bending knees while remaining upright using pressure to flatten oneself (4)
31 Superior position for intending tandem-rider last away (4)
32 Remove first and last items from bill, if proposal is rejected (4)

ER CROSSWORD No 3446
ociation with Waterstone's

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npleted crossword and coupon above to The 3446, 63 Green Lane, St Albans, Hertfordshire ay, February 4.

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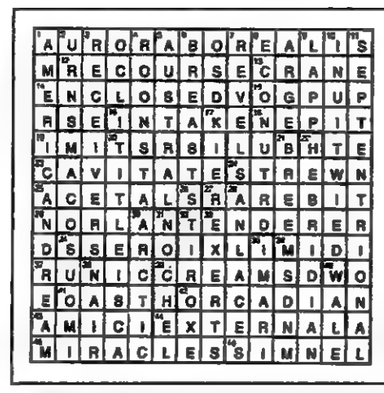


Solution and notes for No 3443: The Top Line by Obiter

The title in the top line is AURORA BOREALIS, ie, Northern Lights, defining the unclued lights except for 5 (AUSTRAL). The thematic indicator is N.

Across: 15; nog rev. of up. 19; I'm nit. 23; 'vita' in 'cat' en. 27; rare bint. 41; anag of 'nt as o'. 43; rev of 'man' ICL **Down** 7; 'NV' in 'reels'. 8; E CO ut.20; tin anag of 'let'. 21; brenem (ref Bremen). 26; 'ti' in 'SRN'. 28; 'a' anag of 'alecs'. 31; oche l. 33; rev of 'rex' in 'nets'. 36; i' Man RL 40; wanle

The winner is Dr D.J. Sloan, of Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim. The runners-up are H. Martin, of Caernarfon, Wales; Mrs Renée Anne Naef, of Lightwater, Surrey; Chris Moulton, of Wirral, Merseyside; M. Galloway, of Marlow, Buckinghamshire; B. Dunlop, of Kings Lynn, Norfolk.

BRIDGE

by Robert Sheehan

THE HAND below was the subject of Question 2 of the Christmas quiz. East-West should have got a big penalty. Which was (a) the worst bid, (b) the most imaginative bid and (c) the wettest bid? (Luckily all competitors interpreted my sloppy "bid" to include pass.)

Love all — Dlr West — Rubber Bridge

North: ♠AJ10 ♥KQ10 ♦A10 ♣KQJ84

West: ♠KQ9842 ♥6 ♦6 ♣A107632

East: ♠76 ♥AJ942 ♦KQJ83 ♣9

South: ♠853 ♥8763 ♦97542 ♣5

S	W	N	E
-	1C[1]	Dble[2]	Redble[3]
1D[4]	1S[5]	2NT[6]	Dble[7]
3C[8]	Pass[9]	Pass	Pass[10]

Contract: Three Clubs (sic) by South
Lead: three of clubs

The contract went three down. It was an instructive sequence.

1 Two-suiters in which the suits are conveniently placed to show them both make sound openers even with as few as nine high-card points, provided the high cards are concentrated in the long suits.

2 Intending to rebid 2NT to show 20-22 points.

3 A redouble in this situation shows interest in playing for penalties. With short spades, One Heart is a reasonable alternative. But redouble should have worked well.

4 This is best. After the redouble all South is concerned with is finding a fit at a low level.

5 In this sequence, the opener should pass over One Diamond unless he has a weak highly distributional hand. So One Spade means West has nine or more cards in the black suits, and is not defensively orientated.

6 This is the worst bid in the auction. He has received the warning that South has very little, so the choice is between 1NT and Pass.

7 Sound, even though he knows the lack of communication between the East-West hands will make the defence difficult.

8 Imaginative — it can't really be an attempt to play in clubs as West has shown at least five of the suit. So it implies he has length in both majors. However, after his partner's 2NT rebid it might have been better to pass — there was no guarantee of a fit in the majors.

9 I passed because I was afraid North-South would find a heart fit, and I thought North was capable of passing Three Clubs in error.

10 East should double Three Clubs — he knows West has at least five, and crucially he has the hearts well held. Even wetter than West.

Worst bid: North's 2NT (10 points). **Most imaginative:** South's Three Clubs (10 points). West's Redouble (5 points). **Wettest call:** East's final pass (10 points), West's final pass (5 points).

● *The Macallan International Pairs results are in Sport.*

WORD ANSWERS

Answers from page 40

SAUGRENU
(c) Absurd, preposterous, ridiculous. The French word. "The saugrenu, comic Shakespeare scenes."

PAPELITO
(b) A cigarette. In Spanish, literally "a slip of paper, a bit of paper". Ouida, *Under Two Flags*, 1867: "Something to drink and something to smoke, were it only a glass of brown sherry and a little papelito."

RAAD
(a) A council, an assembly. Specifically (usually with capital initial) the legislative assembly of one of the former Boer republics. The Dutch word for a council. "The Minister of Labour says that in no circumstances will he sit in the same raad as a non-white."

ROSH HASHANA
(a) The Jewish New Year, celebrated on the first and second day of the month Tishri. In Hebrew "the head of the year". "Rosh Hashana is Coronation Day for G-d as our King and for Israel as His people."

TWO BRAINS

Answers from page 40

Question 1:
Macbeth called the witches juggling fiends.
Question 2:
No. The act of catching a falling object exerts sufficient force to destroy the bridge.

CHESS

by Raymond Keene

THE past year has been some kind of *annus mirabilis* for grandmaster Matthew Sadler. A share of first prize in the British Championship, outstanding performances in both the European and World Team Championships for the British Chess Federation squad, a good showing in the Mind Sports Olympiad and now victory in the Hastings Premier. The only blot on the landscape was his relatively early ejection from the Fide knockout championship in Groningen. Here is one of Sadler's most decisive games from the Hastings tournament which he dominated.

White: Matthew Sadler; Black: James Plaskett
Hastings Premier, January 1998
Pirc Defence

1 d4 d6 2 e4 Nf6
3 Nc3 g6 4 f4 Bg7
5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be3

The opening has been a variation of the Pirc Defence. If now 6 ... Nc6 7 Be2 a6 8 e5 Ng4 9 Bg1 b5 leads to highly unclear play. However, after 6 ... Nc6 the simple 7 Qd2 Bg4 8 0-0-0 gives White an edge.

6 ... b6 7 Qd2 c5
8 d5 Nbd7 9 h3

White prepares a storm on the king's flank and also rules out the annoying prospect of ... Ng4.

9 ... Rb8 10 Bb5

White's king's bishop looks an effective attacking unit. Nevertheless, Sadler is prepared to give it up for Black's knight on d7.

10 ... a6 11 Bxd7 Qxd7

Here I would have preferred to recapture with the knight.

12 e5

Black is forced back on all fronts.

12 ... Ne8 13 0-0 Bb7
14 Rad1

Black's opening strategy has backfired.

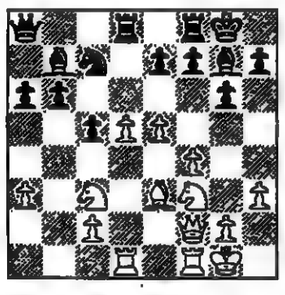
14 ... Nc7 15 a3 Rbd8
16 b4 Qc8

This seems over-ambitious. Black could still have obtained an endgame after 16 ... dxe5 17 Nxe5 Bxe5 18 fxe5 Nxd5 19 Nxd5 Qxd5 20 Qxd5 Rxd5 21 Rxd5 Bxd5 22 bxc5.

17 Qf2 Qa6

Black's pieces have gravitated far from the defence of his king.

18 bxc5 dxc5



White now switches his rook to press Black's queenside pawns.

19 Rb1 Nxd5 20 Nxd5 Bxd5
21 Rxb6 c4 22 Bc5 Rd7

Black's king's bishop is beginning to look more feeble.

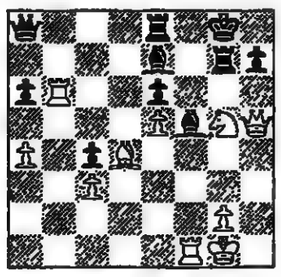
23 c3 Rb8 24 Rfb1 Rbd8
25 Bd4 e6 26 h4 Bf8
27 a4 Bc6 28 h5

At long last the storm breaks.

28 ... gxh5

This looks suicidal, but White was gearing up for a massive attack with moves such as Ng5 and Qh4.

29 f5 Be4 30 fxe6 fxe6
31 Rf1 Bf5 32 Ng5 Re8
33 Qh4 Rg7 34 Qxh5 Be7



White's tactic wrecks the co-ordination of the black forces.

35 Rxe6 Qc8 36 Rxf5

Another hammerblow.

36 ... exf5 37 Rxh7

A further sacrifice. 37 ... Rxh7 would be refuted by 38 Rg6+ Rg7 39 Rxg7+ Kxg7 40 e6+ Bf6 41 Qg5+.

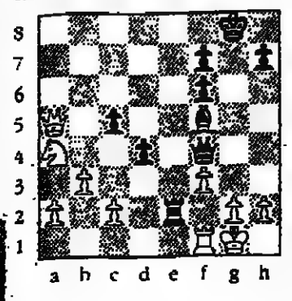
37 ... Qxa6 38 Nf6+ Bxf6
39 Qxa8+ Kh7
40 exf6 Black resigns

Sadler's finale was spectacular.

WINNING MOVE

by Raymond Keene

BLACK to play. This position is from the game Maximenko — Shatskov, Russia 1997.



This position illustrates the dangers of decentralising the pieces. White's queen and knight are playing little part in the struggle and Black exploited their absence to conclude the game quickly. Can you see how?

The first correct answer drawn on Thursday will win a year's subscription to the Staunton Society. Answers on postcards to Winning Move, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN.

The answer will be published next Saturday.

Solution to last week's competition: 1 Qf7+
The winner is: N.S. Brown, of Barnoldswick, Lancashire.

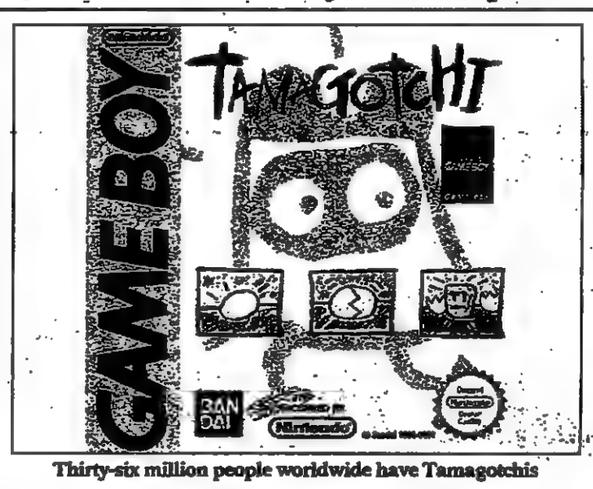
COMPUTER GAMES AND PASTIMES

by Tim Wapshott

ARE YOU bored with Tamagotchis or do you reckon there is life in the old digital dog yet? Last year, 36 million people were caught up in the cyberpet craze, going to extraordinary lengths to secure a glorified keyfob to feed, clean up after and train. For producers Bandai the fad spelled a bonanza and its factories worked around the clock to keep up with demand.

The portable pals were as popular with adults as children and all faced the same problem: how to tend their critters around the clock. In Japan, sober-suited if sad businessmen checked their Tamis into special crèches so they could attend business meetings. Otherwise, where you went, it went. The specially protective saw their pets live to a ripe old age. Those with challenged attention-spans, however, saw their bleeping mites wither and die.

So where do you take the Tamagotchi fad once a large chunk of the world has already bought it, for £5 or £10 a time? Bandai thinks it has the answer with two products, costing much more than the original gizmo. Just released is one Tamagotchi version for the Nintendo Game Boy and another for the PC but neither is as satisfying as the first. The **Game Boy Tamagotchi** allows you to raise three pets simultaneously. The PC version is bright and breezy but not much bigger since the pets are trapped in a small screen. After a short intro, you are ready to hatch your first egg which must be fed, entertained, disciplined and cleared up after if it is to grow.



Thirty-six million people worldwide have Tamagotchis

What started out as a quick-buck idea has grown into a hefty-priced sequel with the PC version selling for £19.99 and the Game Boy format at £29.99. The original was the best as the skill in raising a cyberpet was finding time to keep it happy with a press of buttons — leaving it to fend for itself when you were out wasn't enough. The Game Boy slant is self-defeating since it has a permanent pause feature: when you turn off the pocket console, the pet is frozen in cyberspace and time until your return. The PC version is less generous, you can leave it unattended at the care centre *for up to three days* but as a PC title there's not enough to it.

Whenever I hear the word Tamagotchi I think of modest Aki Maita. She's the young Japanese housewife who, three years ago, dreamt up the whole concept of pocket pets. An employee in Bandai's Toy Enterprise Division, she came up with the idea after spotting a boom in the number of real pets getting good homes. She took the idea to her boss and the rest became marketing history, except that Aki has not made a penny out of the bestseller she came up with and still takes home the same pay packet. Nor has she been promoted. She has apparently said that she hopes Bandai will eventually promote her, which begs the question what the hell's a girl got to do over there to get noticed?

NOW IS the time when all serious gameplayers are beginning to come undone with their Christmas software. It always happens. One minute you are sailing along losing entire evenings to gaming and the next you reach a dead end. If you are lucky, someone at work is a stage ahead of you and can help.

If you have no one to call on, a couple of slick game cheats could end your pathetic pondering. Datel, the company which specialises in console accessories like memory cards, is exploiting the cheat market with codes at its website (http://www.datel.co.uk).

Here are a few choice examples. In **Tomb Raider II**, give yourself infinite oxygen with 8008C66E 0710 or infinite shotgun ammo with 8008C724 FFFF. In **Final Fantasy VII** you can stop bomb countdowns with 8009D12E 000F. In **Golden Eye**, grab infinite ammo at the dam with 800BAB97 FFFF. At the facility you can get infinite health with 8109D7DC 3F80 or for the same at the bunker/silo, type 8109AFDC 3F80.

CROSS WORDS

Answers from page 40

Awkward, baklava, take aim; inaptitude, ineptitude, propaganda; daylight robbery, exclamation mark; public transport

NEW SOFTWARE

SINGER Sam Fox once said that she had six pairs of trainers, "one for every day of the week". Well, should you fancy a different hairstyle for every day of the week clap eyes on **Wig Out!**, an excellent fantasy hairstyling tool.

Load up a digital picture of yourself, trace the outline of the face and start clicking your way through 50 hairstyles. Crew-cuts, highlights or flyaway locks all crop up and the beauty of the title is that you no longer have to wait weeks for disasters to grow out before trying again.

You can tint hair any colour from peroxide blond to black as well as add a host of accessories to complete the new you. Facial hair, spectacles, jewellery and hats complete the picture and can be scaled for a perfect fit. Results can be printed or exported by e-mail.

Wig Out from Connectix is available separately or as part of a compilation called **Family Antics**. This costs £6 more and includes three other programmes — a desktop designer, multimedia greeting card package and picture album maker. Either way, Wig Out! remains a star buy. If you have trouble finding it, call Connectix on 0181-561 1414.

■ **Verdict: 7 out of 10. Change your image — it's a hoot. £29 on its own or £34.95 in Family Antics compilation.**

Wig Out! can work wonders

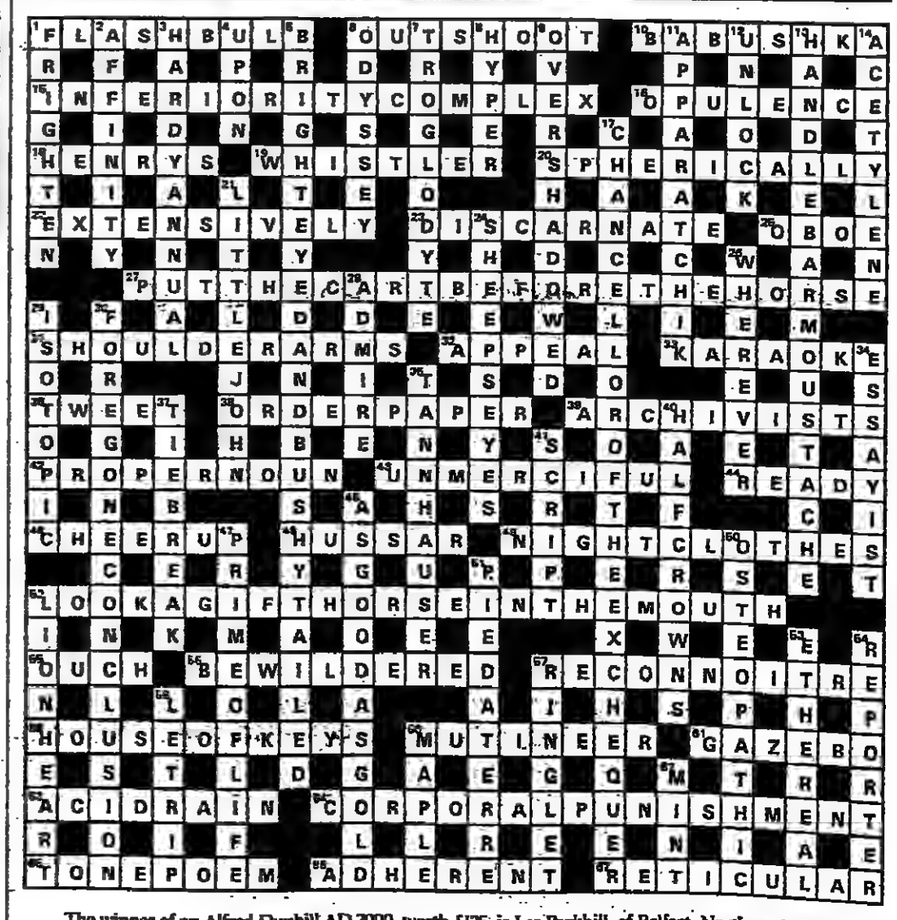
EVEN WITH money-made-easy programmes, when I start doing my accounts my head hurts. Not a natural with figures, even a ticking watch can throw my concentration so I have an automatic phobia about zany packages with jangling bell and whistle sound effects. Fortunately, in **Money 98** (standard) these can be turned down but still the title is not music to the ears.

The title is a facelift of Microsoft's original Money for Windows 95 programme but beyond the new opening menu arrangement, little has changed for the better in the programme's engine department. You can track various accounts at once and it is easy to enter transaction details. These get sorted automatically, by date. They can also be arranged in groups to fuel good-looking analysis, like flow charts and pie charts.

But in too many departments Money 98 leaves you shortchanged. Keeping an eye on looming quarterly VAT bills is not so easy, nor is the tracking of weekly or monthly repeat transactions, like mortgage payments. Money 98 muddles money-matters further by attempting to develop into an interactive money-source, filling up disk space with educational but often unnecessary training and explanation features. The space would be better spent providing a more comprehensive help facility or an online manual.

■ **Verdict: 6 out of 10. Money 98 = money matters made murky. £29.99.**

SOLUTION TO JUMBO CROSSWORD 146



The winner of an Alfred Dunhill AD 2000, worth £125, is Les Parkhill, of Belfast, Northern Ireland

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TENNIS: BOUNCING CZECH THREATENS TO LEAVE SAMPRAS SHORT-CHANGED AT AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Korda goes through the pain barrier

FROM JULIAN MUSCAT, TENNIS CORRESPONDENT IN MELBOURNE

PETE SAMPRAS, the defending champion, continued his progress through the Australian Open yesterday with another clinical victory in the third round. The latest to feel his force was Magnus Gustafsson, who was beaten, like those before him, in straight sets.

However, one man who could derail Sampras from his march towards an eleventh grand-slam title is Petr Korda, of the Czech Republic. Korda beat Sampras over five sets in the US Open in September, and here he has only dropped one set in three matches thus far. He was ruthless against Vincent Spadea yesterday, banishing the American 6-2, 7-6, 6-2 en route to a fourth-round meeting with Cedric Pioline.

Korda, who celebrated his thirtieth birthday yesterday, has displayed a real sense of purpose in these championships. Time is catching up with his limbs but he feels young in mind. There will be few better chances for Korda, a prodigious talent, to capture that elusive first grand-slam title. He is free of pain, although his strongest asset is almost certainly the recognition that he was robbed of the best three years of his career. Rather than a fading pulse, he is more like a time-bomb waiting to detonate.

"Age doesn't matter compared to how you feel inside," Korda, seeded No 6, said after beating Spadea with his trademark fluency from the baseline. "I am going full speed ahead and having a fantastic time. To be healthy has been the biggest improvement in my whole life. Seven years ago, when I was in the top ten, I probably beat myself.

"I wish I could turn back the clock," he said. "Back then I couldn't face the word 'surgery'. I played on painkillers for nearly three years and I was struggling on court. I didn't practise, I didn't do conditioning work. I wish I'd had the surgery much earlier. I was young at the time and it was a big mistake. I almost quit in 1995."

The reason he did not was the insistence of Tony Pickard, now Greg Rusedski's coach, who made sure that he underwent the groin operation that he required. He had already had two hernias stitched up, and he was to have minor surgery twice more before resuming his career. That he was able to rescale the heights is a testament to his natural ability.

Even now, Korda remains troubled by the healing process after a sinus operation two months ago. He dismisses its relevance to his prospects of bettering his sole appearance in a grand-slam final — when he offered little resistance to Jim Courier in Paris six years ago. "I am having a little bit of a problem breathing but it is nothing major," he said. "I know what it means to play with pain, so I can say that I am free of it."

Pigeon-holed as something of a whinger, he did his reputation no favours with the manner of his withdrawal from the US Open five months ago. Having beaten Sampras in the previous round, he retired in the quarter-finals with what was described at the time as a "head cold." It was anything but.

"It was stupid to even try to play that match with [Jonas] Bjorkman," Korda said. "I was as sick as a dog. I was hitting the ball so well that I could have played with my eyes closed, but my body refused to participate. From then on, I had nosebleeds, I couldn't breathe and I was living on nose drops. It almost cost me the end of the year."

Despite his tribulations, Korda's year-end flourish was quite spectacular. He made the semi-finals in four out of six tournaments after New York, winning in Stuttgart, where he beat Pioline, Marcelo Rios, Pat Rafter and Richard Krajicek without dropping a set. He then opened the new year by winning in Doha. He is a form horse, and Sampras, whose lengthy record against him shows five defeats, will have one eye fixed on his progress.

Advancement for Iva Majoli, seeded No 4, came to an abrupt halt yesterday when she was routed by Tamarine Tanasugarn, of Thailand. There is no telling what such a reverse might do for Majoli's confidence. Tanasugarn, world-ranked No 44, won 6-0, 6-2 in an upset that will take some matching through the rest of the year. The French Open champion was certainly disorientated afterwards. "I'm shocked," she said. "I still can't believe that this really happened. It will be even more difficult tomorrow, when I wake up and realise how badly I lost."

Tanasugarn, 20, could hardly believe it, either. She was almost apologetic in the aftermath, preferring not to divulge that she is revered in Thailand, where she is the sportswoman of the year, carried the Olympic flag in Atlanta and lit the flame for the Asian Games in Bangkok this year. She was born in Los Angeles, the daughter of a restaurateur who took her back to Bangkok when she was five.

The only other significant women's reverse concerned Lisa Raymond, seeded No 13, who lost to Patty Schnyder, of Switzerland, in three sets. Venus Williams, meanwhile, maintained her progress with a 6-1, 6-4 defeat of Amelie Mauresmo, of France.

Walking on air: Korda leaps for joy after dismissing Spadea from the third round in straight sets yesterday

BOWLS

Scottish duo secure title in below-par encounter

BY DAVID RHYS JONES

THE BBC's television cameras arrived in Preston yesterday just in time to catch the final of the Saga world indoor pairs championship, in which Graham Robertson and Richard Corsie, of Scotland, defeated Gary Smith and Andy Thomson, of England, 7-4, 4-7, 6-7, 7-1, 7-0.

Although, as the scores of the last two sets suggest, the Scots were full value for their win, the match was disappointing, falling below the standard set in Thursday's semi-finals, which saw some outstanding performances.

The opening sets were patchy, and it was not until the Scots took the game by the scruff in the fourth set that there was anything to inspire spectators, at home or in the Guildhall.

"We shortened the length of jack in the fourth set, and Graham started to pile his woods on top of it," Corsie said. "That made all the difference. It wasn't a bad way to finish, 7-1, 7-0 was it?"

Corsie won the pairs in 1995, with Alex Marshall, with whom he also won the world outdoor title in 1992. Robertson helped Scotland to win the world outdoor fours championship in 1992, but this was his first world indoor title.

Smith and Thomson, a pair with a long pedigree, were playing in their fifth world indoor pairs final, winning the title once — in 1993.

Competitors seemed pleased with the new format, which sees the pairs event virtually completed before the singles gets underway.

One player who was not too pleased was Tony Allcock, the world outdoor singles champion, who was bundled out by Neil Booth, the 1997 Irish champion, on Thursday night. In the only singles game to be played before the pairs final.

The match attracting most interest seems to be the first-round meeting between Hugh Duff, the holder and No 1 seed, and Les Gillett, who beat four world champions — Duff included — on his way to the International Open title in October.

SNOOKER

McManus suffers at the hands of Hunter

BY PHIL YATES

PAUL HUNTER, the recipient of a glowing testimonial from Steve Davis earlier in the week, continued to show disregard for the reputation of opponents on his way to the semi-finals of the Regal Welsh Open in Newport yesterday.

Hunter, 19, maintained the composure that brought the downfalls of Davis and Nigel Bond in the previous two rounds during a 5-3 victory over Alan McManus, the world No 10. He is now sure to collect at least £16,000, the largest prize-money sum of his brief career.

Yet, while Hunter, described by Davis as "a very strong prospect", merited praise, McManus displayed surprising deficiencies. There was no portent of the mistakes to follow as McManus, with a 125 total clearance, an 82 break and, in a low-scoring fifth frame, a green-to-pink clearance, established a 3-2 lead.

Accuracy and poise then deserted McManus and he allowed Hunter to gain a foothold. Capitalising to the full, Hunter had runs of 49, 57 and 67 to supplement his list of notable victories.

Hunter, an 80-1 pre-tournament outsider, was overjoyed. "My heart was fluttering towards the end, now I can't wait to play again," Hunter, who left Cardinal Heenan High School in Leeds at 15 to concentrate on snooker, said.

McManus, never one to baulk at self-criticism, said: "When you miss as many simple balls as that, you can't expect to win."

David Taylor, who reached the semi-finals of the world championship in 1980, and Jim McMahon, whose managerial connections with Alan McManus were recently severed, have been co-opted on to the board of directors of the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association (WPBSA).

Ian Doyle, head of the Team GdeZ Capital management group that includes Stephen Hendry and Ronnie O'Sullivan among its clients, has been served with a writ by the WPBSA for alleged libel in an article in a Scottish newspaper on December 14.

FOR THE RECORD

BASKETBALL

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION (NBA) Charlotte 93 Houston 86; Cleveland 112 Sacramento 96; Los Angeles Clippers 76 Detroit 94.

MEN'S EUROLEAGUE: Group E: Turk Telekom 80 Olympiakos (Gr) 82; Porto 67 Efes Pilsen (Tur) 98. Group H: Ulkerspor (Tur) 88 Cibona Zagreb 82; Hapoel Jerusalem 69 Teamsystem Bologna 74; Partizan Belgrade 71 AEK Athens 79.

BOWLS

PRESTON: Saga world indoor championships: Singles: First round: N Booth (Ire) bt A Allcock (Eng) 5-7, 7-3, 7-5, 7-6. Pairs: Semi-finals: G Robertson and R Corsie (Scot) bt M McMahon and S Glasson (Aus) 5-7, 7-6, 0-7, 7-0, 7-4; A Thomson and G Smith (Eng) bt S Rees and J Price (Wales) 7-6, 7-1, 6-7, 4-7, 7-6. Final: Robertson and Corsie bt Smith and Thomson 7-4, 4-7, 6-7, 7-1, 7-0

ENGLISH WOMEN'S INDOOR BOWLING ASSOCIATION INTER-CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP (Yeaton Trophy): Zone finals: Thornaby bt Eldon 99-55, Blackpool Newton Hall bt York 93-80; Nottingham bt Lincoln 84-72; City of Ely bt Rushden 97-68; Diss bt Lyemsport 87-75; Beccles bt Stonyhill 85-84, Tye Green bt Picketts Lock 70-68; Rawson bt Foxhill 108-69, Bentham bt Avon Valley 99-65, King George Field bt Sutton 88-61, Egham bt Loddon Vale 87-77; Dartford Stone-Lodge bt Mote Park 79-78; Preston (Brighton) bt Wealden 72-62; Atherley bt Moonfleet 82-72, Northavon bt Donyatt 79-62; Torbay bt West Cornwall 85-65.

CRICKET

Carlton and United final series

Australia v South Africa

MELBOURNE (South Africa won toss): South Africa beat Australia by six runs

SOUTH AFRICA

D J Cullinan st Gilchrist b Warne	26
G Kirsten st Gilchrist b M Waugh	70
L Klusener c Bevan b Moody	0
J H Kallis c Gilchrist b Wilson	33
*W J Cronje c Bevan b Lehmann	29
J N Rhodes c Gilchrist b Lehmann	21
S M Pollock c Bevan b Warne	36
P L Symcox b M Waugh	10
S M McMillan lbw b Warne	2
†D J Richardson not out	11
Extras (w 2, nb 1)	3
Total (9 wkts, 50 overs)	241

A A Donald did not bat.

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-55, 2-62, 3-126, 4-137, 5-178, 6-188, 7-203, 8-210, 9-241

BOWLING: Wilson 9-0-52-1, Reiffel 9-0-18-0; Warne 10-1-52-3; Moody 5-0-24-1; Harvey 9-0-39-0; M Waugh 10-0-45-2; Lehmann 4-0-11-2.

AUSTRALIA

M E Waugh run out	3
*A C Gilchrist c Symcox b Pollock	20
R T Ponting c Richardson b Donald	33
D S Lehmann run out	31
*S R Waugh c Richardson b McMillan	53
M G Bevan run out	15
†I J Moody run out	7
J Harvey b Donald	1
P R Reiffel c Richardson b Donald	0
S K Warne b Pollock	1
R Wilson not out	1
Extras (lb 6, w 5, nb 3)	14
Total (49.5 overs)	235

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-15, 2-37, 3-85, 4-105, 5-236, 6-220, 7-231, 8-234, 9-235

BOWLING: Pollock 9.5-1-39-2; Klusener 10-0-36-0; Symcox 10-1-56-0; Donald 10-0-36-3; McMillan 9-1-39-1; Kallis 4-0-23-0

Man of the match: A A Donald.

Umpires: D B Hair and S G Randell.

UNDER-19 WORLD CUP: Super League: Johannesburg: Australia 253-8 (J Hopes 71); Pakistan 226 (S Anwar 60 not out). Australia win by 27 runs. New Zealand 180 (J Engelfield 54; C Bandara 4-20), Sri Lanka 139. New Zealand win by 41 runs. Pool tables: Pool one: 1, South Africa 2pts; 2, New Zealand 2; 3, Zimbabwe 0; 4, Sri Lanka 0. Pool two: 1, Australia 4pts; 2, England 2; 3, India 0; 4, Pakistan 0.

SHEFFIELD SHIELD (first day of four): Brisbane: Queensland 405-9 (A J Bichel 110, A Symonds 100) v Victoria.

FOOTBALL

SOUTH EAST COUNTIES LEAGUE: Second division: Luton 3 Barnet 0.

SCHOOLS MATCHES: Boodle and Dunthorne Cup: Semi-final: Repton 3 Bolton 4 (aet). Premier League Trophy: Under-18: Devon 1 Cornwall 0; Leicestershire 1 Nottinghamshire 3. Goodyear Trophy: First round: Park Hall 4 Cardinal Griffin 0; Mullion 2 St Peters, Devon 5; Stopsley 2 Bishop's Stortford 6; Birchwood 2 Kingsway 1; Blue Coat 5 Ellesmere Port 0; Northampton Boys 10 Amersham 1; Douay Martyrs 3 Woodside 1; St Augustine's 3 Forest Boys 5; Newmarket Upper 0 St Gregory's High 3. First-round replay: St Wilfred's 2 Newall Green 1. Vimto Girls Trophy: First round: Redhill 1 Netherthorpe 4; John Cleveland College 2 Belper 1; Bodmin College 0 Wellesley 5; Worcestershire 0 Gloucestershire 4. Snickers Under-19 Individual tournament: First round: Glyn (Surrey) 3 Ardingly (Sussex) 3; Thomas Hardy (Dorset) 4 St Lawrence (Wilts) 1; Thurston (Suffolk) 2 Neale Wade College (Cambridge) 3; Dr Challoner's GS (Amersham) 2 Chenwell (Oxford) 0.

Thursday's late results

FA TROPHY: First-round replay: Chelmsham 5 Enfield 1.

AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION: First division: Norwich 2 Swindon 1

JEWSON WESSEX LEAGUE: First division: Postponed: Whitchurch v Cowes Sports

THE TIMES FA YOUTH CUP: Third round: Everton 1 Stoke 0.

ITALIAN CUP: Quarter-final, second leg: Atalanta 1 AC Parma 1 (Parma win 2-1 on agg)

SPANISH CUP: Fourth round, second leg: Valencia 1 Barcelona 3 (Barcelona win 5-2 on agg).

GOLF

PHUKET, Thailand: Johnnie Walker Classic: Leaders after two rounds: 132: E Els (SA) 67, 65. 135: A Cejka (Ger) 67, 68. 138: P Harrington (Ire) 69, 67. 137: L Westwood (Eng) 71, 66; P O'Malley (Aus) 69, 68. 139: S Leaney (Aus) 70, 69; N Faldo (Eng) 71, 67. 139: S Alker (NZ) 68, 71; P Marksaeng (Thai) 67, 72; A Coltart (Scot) 71, 68. 140: P McGinley (Ire) 69, 71; G Chalmers (Aus) 72, 68. 141: D Chopra (Swe) 68, 73; P Lonard (Aus) 70, 71; P Price (Wales) 69, 72; A Akwal (Ind) 70, 71; J Cooper (Aus) 71, 70. 142: Zhang Lian-Wei (China) 70, 72; R Goosen (SA) 71, 71; P Baker (Eng) 73, 69; F Tarnaud (Fr) 73, 69. Other scores: 143: T Woods (US) 72, 71; F Minoza (Phil) 73, 70. 144: J M Olazabal (Sp) 72, 72. 148: J O'Keefe (US) 76, 70. Did not qualify: 148: I Woosnam (Wales) 72, 76.

SCOTTSDALE, Arizona: Phoenix Open: Leaders after first round (United States unless stated): 63: M Hulbert. 64: S Stricker, B Gelberger. 65: S Jones, L Rinker, D Duval. 66: J Durant. 67: D Barron, N Price (Zim), S McCarron, R Fehr, J Leonard, K Gibson. 68: G Day, J Adams, D Waldorf, P Mickelson, D Forsman, D Edwards, J Parnevik (Swe), T Armour, D Pooley, T Watson, B Henninger, S Flesch. Other score: 71: A Lyle (GB).

PALM BEACH: LPGA event: Leading first-round scores (United States unless stated): 67: M Mallon, P Hurst. 68: A Diaz (Peru), H Alfredsson (Swe). 69: M Halpin, W Ward. 70: C Rarick, C Walker, J Stephenson (Aus), L Neumann (Swe), J Inkster, D Eggeling, B Daniel, T Barrett, M Monts, M Lunn (Aus), T Hanson, H Dobson (GB). Other British scores: 71: L Davies, L Hackney. 74: K Marshall.

WORLD RANKINGS: 1, T Woods (US) 11.00pts; 2, G Norman (Aus) 10.74; 3, E Els (SA) 10.07; 4, N Price (Zim) 9.91; 5, P Mickelson (US) 9.69; 6, D Love (US) 9.44; 7, C Montgomerie (Scot) 9.33; 8, M O'Meara (US) 8.06; 9, J Daiki (Japan) 8.05; 10, T Lehman (US) 7.85. Other British: 17, N Faldo (Eng) 6.21; 23, L Westwood (Eng) 5.26; 26, I Woosnam (Wales) 4.96; 34, D Clark (N Ire) 3.7; 78, P Harrington (Ire) 2.09; 84, A Coltart (Scot) 1.87; 90, M James (Eng) 1.77; 100, R Russell (Scot) 1.82.

HOCKEY

ORENSE, Spain: European nations indoor cup: Pool A: England 3 Slovakia 1; Scotland 2 Lithuania 2. Pool B: Spain 3 Austria 7, Germany 11 Russia 1.

TOUR MATCH: Australia Senior Youth 1 England 2 (in Sydney).

ICE HOCKEY

SUPERLEAGUE: Manchester Storm 5 Bracknell Bees 0.

EXPRESS CUP: Cardiff Devils 3 Sheffield Steelers 6.

NATIONAL LEAGUE (NHL): Pittsburgh 3 New Jersey 2; Philadelphia 4 New York Rangers 3; Carolina 4 Ottawa 2; Toronto 3 Chicago 0; St Louis 3 New York Islanders 3 (OT); Anaheim 4 Colorado 3; Los Angeles 3 Florida 1

SKIING

KITZBÜHEL, Austria: Men's World Cup two-leg downhill: 1, D Cuche (Switz) 2min 31.55sec (1min 15.75sec/1min 15.80sec); 2, N Burtin (Fr) 2:31.69 (1:16.03/1:15.66); 3, J-L Cretier (Fr) 2:31.87 (1:16.24/1:15.63); 4 equal, J Gruenenfelder (Switz) 2:32.04 (1:16.15/1:15.89) and A Duvillard (Fr) 2:32.04 (1:16.49/1:15.55); 6, A Schifferer (Austria) 2:32.16 (1:15.93/1:16.23); 7, W Perathoner (It) 2:32.22 (1:16.55/1:15.67); 8 equal, K Ghedina (It) 2:32.30 (1:16.58/1:15.72) and M Hermann (Switz) 2:32.30 (1:16.55/1:15.75). 10, H Knauss (Austria) 2:32.35 (1:16.18/1:16.19). Overall leading positions (after 24 events): 1, H Meier (Austria) 1,405pts; 2, A Schifferer (Austria) 824; 3, S Eberharter (Austria) 797; 4, M Von Gruenigen (Switz) 545; 5, H Knauss (Austria) 502; 6, K-A Aamodt (Nor) 474; 7, C Mayer (Austria) 394; 8 equal, W Franz (Austria) and P Accola (Switz) 369; 10, A Tomba (It) 368; 11, L Kjus (Nor) 354; 12, J Strobl (Austria) 316; 13, K Ghedina (It) 308; 14, T Stangassinger (Austria) 305; 15, D Cuche (Switz) 303.

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO, Italy: Alpine women's World Cup super-G: 1, M Suchet (Fr) 1min 15.25sec; 2, R Hansui (Ger) 1:15.48; 3, K Putzer (It) 1:15.65; 4, H Zurbriggen (Switz) 1:15.67; 5, K Gutensohn (Ger) 1:15.78; 6, S Biacun (Slov) 1:15.88; 7, F Masnade (Fr) 1:15.98; 8, B Perez (It) 1:16.00; 9 equal, K Kristiansen (Nor) and T Schneider (Austria) 1:16.07. Disqualified: S Brauner (Ger), P Wiberg (Swe); G Stroem (Nor).

SNOOKER

NEWPORT: Regal Welsh Open: Quarter-finals: P Hunter (Eng) bt A McManus (Scot) 5-3; P Ebdon (Eng) bt J Burnett (Scot) 5-2

TENNIS

MELBOURNE: Australian Open: Men: Singles: Third round: P Korda (Cz) bt V Spadea (US) 6-2, 7-6, 6-2; C Pioline (Fr) bt A Corretja (Sp) 6-2, 6-1, 6-4; B Black (Zim) bt S Campbell (US) 6-4, 6-0, 6-2; K Kucera (Slovakia) bt D Nestor (Can) 6-2, 7-6, 6-1; H Arazi (Mor) bt F Clavet (Sp) 4-6, 6-4, 3-6, 6-2, 6-1; P Sampras (US) bt M Gustafsson (Swe) 7-5, 6-3, 6-4, J Bjorkman (Swe) bt F Santoro (Fr) 7-5, 6-3, 6-4; R Fromberg (Aus) bt S Lareau (Can) 6-0, 6-2, 4-6, 6-3. Doubles: Second round: S Stolle (Aus) and C Suk (Cz) bt N Godwin and C Haggard (SA) 6-2, 6-2; J-L de Jager and R Koenig (SA) bt J-P Fleurian (Fr) and P Nyborg (Swe) 7-5, 3-6, 6-4, M Gölner and D Prinosil (Ger) bt C Brandi and F Messori (It) 6-4, 6-4; L Hewitt and L Smith (Aus) bt D Adams (SA) and A Kitinov (Macedonia) 6-3, 6-7, 14-12; P Galbraith (US) and B Steven (NZ) bt S Draper and J Stoltenberg (Aus) 6-2, 6-3; D Johnson and F Montana (US) bt S Dosedel (Cz) and L Pimek (Bel) 6-4, 6-4, D Macpherson (Aus) and D Wheaton (US) bt K Alami (Mor) and T van Houdt (Bel) 6-3, 6-4; L Lobo (Arg) and J Sánchez (Sp) bt T Kempers and M Oosting (Holl) 3-6, 6-3, 16-16; E Ferreira (SA) and R Leach (US) bt G Kuerten (Br) and M Sell (US) 6-3, 6-4; M Bhupathi and L Paes (India) bt W Arthurs and A Kratzmann (Aus) 6-2, 6-3; T Woodbridge and M Woodforde (Aus) bt G Doyle and T Larkham (Aus) 6-4, 6-2. Women: Singles: Third round: S Testud (Fr) bt A Gersi (Cz) 6-4, 6-2; L Davenport (US) bt F Perletti (It) 6-2, 6-2; V Williams (US) bt A Mauresmo (Fr) 6-1, 6-4, R Dragomir (Rom) bt F Labat (Arg) 6-2, 7-5; T Tanasugarn (Thai) bt I Majoli (Cro) 6-0, 6-2; P Schnyder (Switz) bt L Raymond (US) 2-6, 6-3, 6-6; B Schett (Austria) bt N Zvereva (Bela) 6-3, 6-1; C Martinez (Sp) bt A-G Sidot (Fr) 3-6, 6-0, 6-3. Doubles: Second round: N Miyagi and N Nijmuta (Japan) bt S Asagoe (Japan) and P Stoyanova (Bul) 6-2, 6-2; S Reeves and M Tu (US) bt N de Villiers (SA) and L McShea (Aus) 6-4, 6-0; K-A Guse and R McQuillan (Aus) bt L Golarsa (It) and D van Roost (Bel) 6-1, 7-5; Park Sung-hee (S Kor) and Shi-Ting Wang (Taiwan) bt S Noorlander (Holl) and N van Lottum (Fr) 6-3, 6-3; M Bollegraf (Holl) and A Sánchez Vicario (Sp) bt V Ruano-Pascual (Sp) and P Suarez (Arg) 6-1, 6-1; E Likhovseva (Russ) and A Sugiyama (Japan) bt C Cristea (Rom) and A Wunderlich (US) 6-2, 7-5; A Coetzer (SA) and A Huber (Ger) bt K Kumoe (Aus) and C Morariu (US) 6-1, 6-0; M Hingis (Switz) and M Lucic (Cro) bt A Kournikova (Russ) and L Neiland (Lat) 7-5, 6-2, Y Basuki (Indo) and C Vis (Holl) bt B Rittner and E Wagner (Ger) 6-2, 6-4, S Appelmans (Bel) and M Oremans (Holl) bt J Lee (Taiwan) and L Lee (US) 6-3, 1-6, 6-3; S Krivencheva (Bul) and E Tatarkova (Ukr) bt T Musgrave (Aus) and J Putin (GB) 7-6 (7-1), 6-4. Mixed doubles: First round: A Florent (Aus) and N Zvereva (Bela) bt L Hewitt (Aus) and S Williams (US) 7-6 (7-3), 6-2; K Kanneer (US) and N Miyagi (Japan) bt J Eagle and R Stubbs (Aus) 1-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7-4); C Suk and H Sukova (Cz) bt J Waite and M McGrath (US) 5-7, 6-3, 6-4; D Johnson (US) and K Boogert (Holl) bt P Nyborg (Swe) and H Vildova (Cz) 6-3, 6-3

NEWPORT, Wales: Girobank Tour: Men: Quarter-finals: N Gould (Avon) bt P Maggs (Avon) 6-1, 7-5; R Matheson (Scot) bt N Watts (Wiltshire) 6-3, 6-1; A Foster (Staffordshire) bt N Weal (Hampshire) 7-5, 6-1; P Hand (Berkshire) bt G Arber (Kent) 6-7, 6-1, 6-1. Semi-finals: Matteson bt Gould 6-1, 6-4; Hand bt Foster 6-4, 4-6, 6-1. Women: Quarter-finals: J Lutrova (Russ) bt K Hiscott (Avon) 6-0, 6-1, K Warne-Holland (Dorset) bt J Osman (Sussex) 6-1, 6-4, H Crook (Essex) bt J Dawson (Sussex) 6-1, 6-2; L Perkins (Durham and Cleveland) bt S van Gend (Holl) 6-0, 6-1. Semi-finals: Lutrova bt Warne-Holland 6-2, 6-4; Perkins bt Crook 7-5, 6-4

TELFORD: Teen finals: Boys: Singles: M Smith (GB) bt F Dancevic (Can) 6-3, 3-6, 6-2. Doubles: S Damoktan and V Pozinov (Russ) wo M Smith and N Crawley (GB). Girls: Singles: G Fokina (Russ) bt A Zerkalova (Russ) 6-3, 3-6, 6-4. Doubles: M Morras and K Rammo (Can) bt A Barnes and A Hawkins (GB) 6-2, 6-4

SPORT ON TELEVISION THIS WEEKEND

AMERICAN FOOTBALL: Tomorrow: Sky Sports 1: Super Bowl (live), from 10.30pm

FOOTBALL: Today: BBC1: Football Focus, in Grandstand, from 12.20pm; Match of the Day (with extended highlights of Middlesbrough v Arsenal, Huddersfield Town v Wimbledon and Coventry City v Derby County). Tomorrow: ITV: FA Cup fourth round, Manchester City v West Ham United (live), from 1.30pm. Channel 4: Football Italia, AC Milan v Fiorentina (live), from 1.15pm. Sky Sports 2: FA Cup fourth round, Stevenage Borough v Newcastle United (live), from 4pm.

RUGBY UNION: Today: Sky Sports 2: Tetley's Bitter Cup fifth round, Saracens v Leicester (live), from 1.30pm. Tomorrow: Channel 5: Rugby Express, from 6pm.

TENNIS: Today: BBC1: Highlights from the Australian Open in Grandstand, 1.25, 1.55 and 2.25pm. Tomorrow: BBC1: Highlights from the Australian Open in Sunday Grandstand, 1.35pm.

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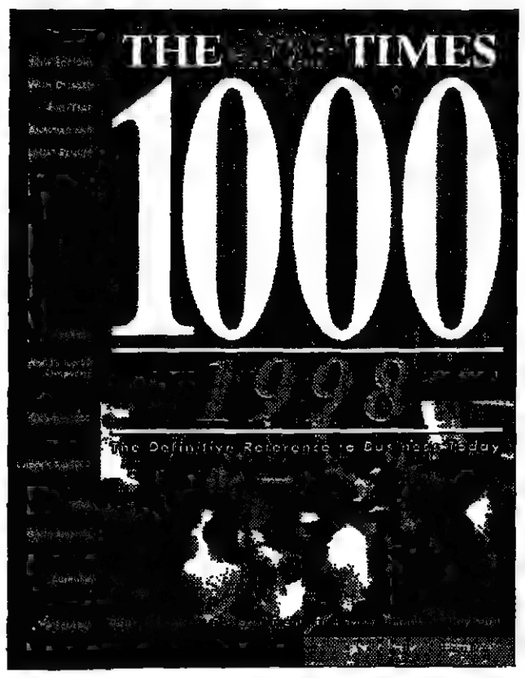

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Italian spice will enhance the flavour of five nations'

'The game needs more than just five countries that can win World Cup'

LAWRENCE DALLAGLIO

The news that Italy look likely to join the five nations' championship in two years' time is welcome, not just from a personal point of view, given my background, but as a welcome boost to everyone. They have been knocking on the door for a number of years now.

When I first became aware of rugby in Italy, in 1991, the standard was well below that of the five nations' at the time. But their progression and development over a comparatively short space of time warrants their inclusion. In six years, they have beaten some notable teams and come close to beating some very notable teams, such as Australia: they have taken heart from their improvement, they have reinvested very sensiblly and have got an interesting blend of culture and flair — that, obviously, I know a lot about, having been brought up in an Italian family — which gives them a unique style.

A number of the world's best players, such as Michael Lynagh and Wayne Shelford, among others, have played there, which has helped the development of home-grown talent. While some people bemoan the number of overseas players in England, this is something that has been going on in Italy for a number of years.

It is very exciting from my point of view and I thoroughly welcome their inclusion. In terms of their playing ability, if they can get their best XV on the field, they are worthy opponents for anyone. They have a big, aggressive pack and talented runners in the back. They are highly talented and it should be a very interesting tournament in a couple of years.

It has been a difficult and frustrating process for them because getting recognition within rugby circles isn't something that is done overnight. They have had to do it the hard way and probably felt at times that things were working against them. But, having beaten Scotland, France and, most recently, Ireland, on present form, they would finish in mid-table in the "six nations' championship".

The game today against Scotland in Treviso will give them a further chance to establish themselves as worthy participants. The game in general needs a global expansion. You can't just have the top eight. Compared with football, there are simply not enough global teams. The whole standard of rugby globally needs to be lifted.

I feel the way the game is financed and moving on has created a large gap in standards. We have seen it in matches such as Argentina against the All Blacks, when the Pumas were trounced by 80 or 90 points. The game needs more than just five countries that have a genuine chance of winning the World Cup in order to be credible.

I sympathise with what Gareth Rees said recently, that the International Board needs to devote resources to help the game develop in places such as Canada. The potential and talent is there, it simply needs supporting, and people outside Canada should recognise that.

We don't want a situation where most of the teams in the World Cup haven't got a hope of qualifying for the latter stages. The leading players need to start pointing towards countries such as Canada and Western Samoa and should start to think about the game on a global level and look towards the next World Cup.

Unless they do that, the World Cup next year is in danger of highlighting what I am talking about — a clear division between the top teams and the rest. And that is a worry. It is not a main worry, but could become one unless action is taken. In football, people are talking about the realistic possibility of, for instance, Tunisia beating England or Norway beating Brazil. That would have been unheard of a few years ago.

Italy did approach me about playing for them about six years ago. They came over to England and saw an English player with Italian heritage and were wondering how I escaped the net. They made inquiries as to whether I could see myself living and playing in Italy. I must admit I could think of worse things to do but, from my point of view, I had already tasted what it was like playing for England at under-19 level. That had given me the desire and ambition to stay in England and try to make a career out of the game here. Italy actually beat us at Grange Road, in Cambridge, 22-21, which highlighted their potential even then.

As I said, the game in Italy has benefited from the presence of Lynagh, who announced his retirement this week. I first came across him in the World Cup Sevens in 1993. I noticed then that he was a great rugby player who maintained a very competitive edge, but was able to be nice with it. That is a rare commodity in the game today and he will certainly be remembered as one of the all-time greats.

On the medical front, I hope to be back playing for Wasps next week. My shoulder is still sore: it has been an accumulation of things but was made worse by one hefty tackle in the Richmond game. Before that, I could play through it, but at the moment that's not possible. The medical bulletin is that, with the right treatment, rest and rehabilitation, I should be playing before the international against France.

Injuries have also affected other members of the England squad. Jason Leonard is coming back after a lengthy lay-off and that's nice at a time when England really need him on board, and everyone welcomes the return of Jerry Guscott. He is still very enthusiastic and ambitious, more so perhaps now than ever.

Richard Cockerill, of Leicester, looked to have picked up a nasty injury at Welford Road last week, but I understand it is not too serious and, hopefully, he will play against Gloucester next week. Then there is Richard Hill, of Saracens, who has not played for five weeks. The back row is very competitive and he realises he needs to get fit. Generally, though, everything is coming together at the right time, which is good news for Clive Woodward, the coach, and, hopefully, for England.

Allan Bateman has been pivotal for Richmond and Wales in his second spell in union

Composure with a hardened centre

DAVID HANDS

Bateman's all-round qualities as an incisive centre have been recognised in both codes of rugby, in both northern and southern hemispheres. Photograph: Adrian Sherratt

There is a self-effacement about Allan Bateman that is at odds with the reputation he enjoys within the increasingly overblown world of rugby union. A neatness, a composure, a willingness to realise that, at 32, he is still improving his game, whereas others — players, coaches — will hold him up as a model of achievement.

Bateman tells the tale, with a faint air of embarrassment, of how frequently he is called upon to demonstrate at Richmond the skills that the coaching staff seek from all the players. It has led, inevitably, to the kind of coarse epithet that rugby players love to bestow on each other. In general, exemplary players such as Rob Andrew have their attributes described as golden but in Bateman's case, his are platinum.

If one were to believe everything that Bateman has to say about his career, you might wonder how he ever came to leave Maesteg and forge a six-year career in the demanding rugby league environs of Warrington and Cronulla Sharks; or, having returned to rugby union in 1996, how he commanded the respect of the selectors and players of Wales and the British Isles.

Every Lions supporter regretted the injury that forced Jeremy Guscott out of the third international with South Africa in Johannesburg last July, but there could not have been greater unanimity over Bateman's appearance as his replacement. It was only what he deserved, after a series of displays against provincial opponents that demonstrated with blinding clarity the all-round quality of the crop-haired centre.

On Bateman's own admission, his wife, Nicola, has made significant contributions to his career. Perhaps it is a case of *cherchez les femmes* because he was brought up in a rugby-mad family. It was Nicola, also from Maesteg, who compiled a video of highlights of her husband's career at Warrington that took him to Cronulla in 1994 and whose encouragement put him on a flight back to Britain two years later.

"We had a wonderful lifestyle in Queensland," Bateman said. "There was a year to run on my contract but I had been edging back towards rugby union and Nicola told me that the Welsh rugby league side were playing England and that I should make myself available, put myself in the shop window for rugby union clubs. It meant flying to England, arriving Tuesday, playing Wednesday and flying back to play for Cronulla on the Saturday; I thought it was too much but I had quite a good game and Derek Quinnell saw me and suggested that Richmond were looking for an outside centre."

It seems strange, in retrospect, that so self-contained a player as Bateman emerged in his previous rugby union incarnation from Neath, the club he joined from Maesteg. The Neath of the late 1980s swept all opponents aside with a brand of 15-man rugby that was ahead of its time. It also earned a reputation for being aggressive, an attitude loved by the club's supporters and loathed by opponents.

"It was full contact, full 15-man rugby and the key to it was fitness," Bateman said. "Ron Waldron was a great coach but he couldn't translate Neath's style to Wales because he found that so few of the players from other clubs were fit enough. In a professional era, Ron would have been seen for what he was, an outstanding coach."

But Bateman, working anything up to 100 hours a week as a scientific officer studying haematology, could not give the time to club, country and profession. He accepted an offer to play for Warrington and went north. "I have never been so nervous before a game as I was before making my league debut, against Halifax seconds," Bateman said. "It was the most terrifying feeling. Playing internationals in front of sell-out crowds has never had that effect."

'I was surprised at the change there had been, but all I wanted to do was play well for Richmond'

So it is that the Bateman family (they have a six-year-old daughter, Naomi) came to live in Esher and how a player with just four Wales caps in 1990 came to be a pillar of the present Wales XV and of ambitious Richmond who, today, attempt to undermine further the foundations of Bath in the Tetley's Bitter Cup.

Be that as it may, Bateman enjoyed success with Warrington and played for Wales's rugby league XIII before leaving for Australia. He might have returned to play rugby union in Wales but for the fact that no club showed any interest in his availability until Llanelli made contact — a few days after he had signed for Richmond.

"I was surprised at how much change there had been, but all I was looking to do was play well for Richmond," Bateman, who won his eleventh Wales cap against New Zealand last November, said. "Everything else that has happened has been a bonus." That incorporates Richmond's promotion to the first division of the Allied Dunbar Premiership, and Bateman is frank about his club's deficiencies.

"We are inconsistent, we are naive, we're not as skilful as we should be. We find it difficult to put one foot on the ball, as it were, and just keep it for ten minutes once we're in the lead. It may be that, at the end of the season, we will be kicking ourselves over where we might have been rather than where we are, but the target at the start of the season was a top-four finish. That's still on and the next goal is a good cup run."

But while Bateman acknowledges the ambitions of the new professional game, he confesses to being a product of the old school, under whose regime he played for eight years. "Rugby still gives you the chance to meet people and make friends, to have a laugh and a drink, although sadly that's drifting out of the game," he said. "But there's always room for some sociability. I cherish the days I had before turning to rugby league as much as anything that happens now."

Lynagh and Stransky go toe to toe in classic encounter

By David Hands
Rugby Correspondent

EUROPE, the Allied Dunbar Premiership battle and controversy may have placed something of a cloud over the Tetley's Bitter Cup, but today, weather permitting, offers rugby worth raising a glass to, not least because Saracens meet the team who took their unbeaten first division record.

That match, on Boxing Day, was sealed only in the eightieth minute by a dropped goal from Joel Stransky that earned Leicester their 22-21 victory. "That defeat still rankles," Mark Evans, the Saracens director of rugby, said. "You don't usually get the chance to go straight out and play it again so we were pleased to receive an early chance to get over that defeat."

Their fifth-round match will surely be another riveting encounter, but there are also financial implications for Saracens. The requirements of television mean the match is played this afternoon rather than on a Sunday; they will wait with trepidation to see whether their gate is affected, though the counterbalance comes from the horde of Leicester supporters likely to descend on Watford.

The Boxing Day game drew 14,291 to Vicarage Road, their highest gate and second only to the crowds that Leicester draw at home. These are the best-supported clubs in the Premiership and the fact that 23 of the 30 players who start the match are internationals will attract the neutrals.

Saracens are able to restore Philippe Sella to their midfield and Richard Hill to the back row after injury. Whether their match fitness will allow both to last the course remains to be seen, but replacements may be needed if Leicester recover the all-embracing form that they displayed against Wasps a week ago. It is hard to resist the notion that the result could boil down again to the duel between two of the world's leading marksmen, Stransky and Michael Lynagh.

Troubled Bath, though they will not confirm their XV until today, will probably take on Richmond without Jonathan Callard, their best goalkicker. They are likely to prefer Matt Perry in an international back division served by the uncapped Ricky Pellow, since Andy Nicol, the scrum half, is away with Scotland — as is David Hilton, the prop. Those backs will include Jeremy Guscott, whose return from injury last week was postponed by a waterlogged Gateshead pitch.

Bath, who challenge for the Heineken Cup next weekend, will be grateful for a game, not having played since the match against London Scottish which was disfigured by the alleged ear-biting incident involving Simon Fenn. It is ironic that they have drawn Richmond, co-tenants with London Scottish and whose captain, Ben Clarke, knows the Recreation Ground so well.

Tomorrow, having dispatched one first-division club in Bristol, Worcester entertain the leaders of the Premiership, Newcastle, and their brave foray is nearing its end. Newbury, the other Jewson National League club still involved, travel to Sale, and though they came away from the North West with victory over Orrell in the third round, an appearance in the draw on Monday seems unlikely.

Scotland pin hopes on Weir

From Mark Souster
in Treviso

TODAY'S international between Italy and Scotland in Treviso is significant on two counts. It provides the opportunity for Italy to reinforce claims to join the four home countries and France in an expanded championship and Scotland a chance to show that their fall from grace — they have won only two of the past 11 matches — can be arrested.

Two years ago, as Rob Wainwright, the captain, freely admits, Scotland badly underestimated Italy and were beaten in Rieti. That defeat was avenged quickly enough at Murrayfield but, since then, the two countries have enjoyed contrasting fortunes. Scotland's recent woes culminated in record defeats by Australia and South Africa whereas, last year, Italy beat France and, more recently, Ireland by 30-22.

While Wainwright and Richie Dixon, the coach, do not share the general air of pessimism, they accept that Scotland are under intense pressure and know that a game with Italy can no longer be treated as an appetiser for the more serious business of the five nations' championship — soon to become six if England ratify a decision in Italy's favour already taken by the other four nations.

Dixon admitted yesterday that the result at the Stadio Monigo is of paramount importance, but added the rider that both sides had a responsibility to attempt a more expansive game to prove that the harsh lessons being taught by the southern hemisphere were at least being grappled with. Perhaps naively, he hoped that Italy would not kill the ball and that Scotland would enjoy quick possession.

The lineout, such a vital source of possession in the modern game, is one area where Scotland should prosper, with the return of Doddie Weir. They also have a fast, dynamic back row, one that includes the new cap, Simon Holmes, of London Scottish.

Whether Italy will play ball is another matter. Even without Massimo Cuttitta, of Harlequins, who is injured, they have a solid, street-wise pack. On a yielding pitch they will look to use the driven maul, tactics that Scotland could struggle to combat. The return of the Newcastle trio of Weir, Alan Tait and Gary Armstrong, means Scotland will be more competitive than of late, but home advantage should enable Italy to win — if only narrowly.

TEAMS

ITALY: C Pilat (Benetton Treviso) P Vaccari (Calvisano) C Stoica (Marborno) L Martin (Padova) M Cuttitta (Milan) D Dominguez (Stade Français), A Troncon (Benetton Treviso), G de Carli (Roma) C Orlandi (Milan) A Castellani (L Aquila), G Croci (Milan), W Crestolletto (Benetton Treviso) M Giovanelli (Narbonne captain), A Sgorlon (Benetton Treviso), J Gardner (Benetton Treviso) Replacements: D Dallan (Benetton Treviso) A Scanavacca (Rovigo), G Guidi (L'Aquila), O Araneo (Toulon) S Rocca (Padova), D Dave (Calvisano)

SCOTLAND: R J S Shepherd (Melrose), A G Stanger (Hawick) A V Tait (Newcastle) C M Chalmers (Melrose) G A Joiner (Leicester) G P J Townsend (Northampton), G Armstrong (Newcastle), D I W Hilton (Bath), G C Bulloch (West of Scotland), M J S Stewart (Northampton), G W Weir (Newcastle), S Murray (Bedford), R I Wainwright (Dundee HSFP, captain), S D Holmes (London Scottish), A J Roxburgh (Kelso) Replacements: D A Stark (Glasgow Hawks), C A Murray (Hawick), A D Nicol (Bath) P Walton (Newcastle) P H Wright (West of Scotland), G Scott (Dundee HSFP)

Referee: D R Davies (Wales)

Yates in England training squad

By David Hands

KEVIN YATES, the suspended Bath prop, received a further vote of confidence from the England management yesterday when he was named in an unchanged training squad of 24 to meet at Bisham Abbey next Wednesday. The fact that Yates and five Bath colleagues are excused the training, owing to the proximity of the Heineken Cup final on January 31, will make no difference to the beleaguered player.

Yates and his advisors are preparing their defence to the charge of ear-biting and such comfort as Clive Woodward, the national coach, can give him will be gratefully received. It does, though, seem slightly perverse of the Rugby Football Union (RFU) to release a squad six of whom are unavailable and one of whom — Yates — is not in contention for a place in the five nations' championship match against France because he cannot play at least until Bath conclude their disciplinary hearing on February 3 — four days before the international in Paris.

It is unlikely that Yates will travel to Bordeaux next week, when Bath play Brive for the Heineken Cup. He withdrew from England training last week, because of the ear-biting furore after his club's cup match with London Scottish, and would hardly wish to deflect attention from his colleagues on the European stage.

However, England's six additional nominees to train next week include Dominic Chapman, 21, the Richmond wing invited to an Ireland squad session on the same day. Chapman's finishing, which puts him among the first division's leading try scorers with eight, has attracted admiration and he must decide which national qualification to take up.

Dorian West, Leicester's second-string hooker, who won England A caps last season, is also invited and there is optimism that Richard Cockerill will be able to train. Cockerill damaged a knee playing for Leicester against Wasps last weekend and is a replacement against Saracens today.

England will play their two World Cup qualifying matches, between November 14 and 22, at the McAlpine Stadium in Huddersfield, where England A played the New Zealanders last November. Their opponents will not be known until the conclusion of the qualifying rounds being played between now and May, but are due to come from a group led by Romania and Holland, and also including Poland, Ukraine and Belgium.

The decision follows England's successful visit to Old Trafford last November, where they played the All Blacks.

SQUAD

ENGLAND: Backs: M Perry (Bath), A Healey (Leicester), D Rees (Sale), P de Glanville (Bath), W Greenwood (Leicester), J Guscott (Bath), M Catt (Bath), P Grayson (Northampton), K Bracken (Saracens), M Dawson (Northampton) Forwards: D Garforth (Leicester), J Leonard (Harlequins), G Rowntree (Leicester), K Yates (Bath), R Cockerill (Leicester), M Regan (Bath), G Archer (Newcastle), D Grewcock (Saracens) M Johnson (Leicester), N Back (Leicester), L Dallaglio (Wasps), A Diprose (Saracens), R Hill (Saracens), T Rodber (Northampton) Additional players: C Catling (Gloucester), D Chapman (Richmond), S Potter (Leicester), A King (Wasps) P Greening (Gloucester), D West (Leicester)

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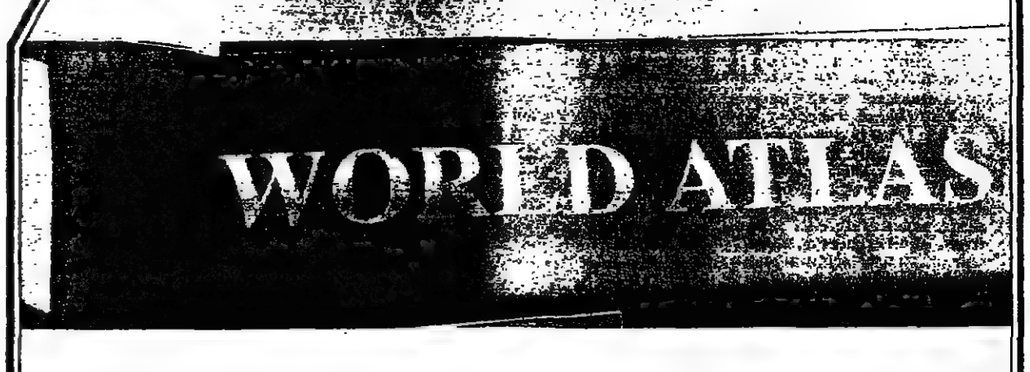

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Andrew Scott James Belshaw
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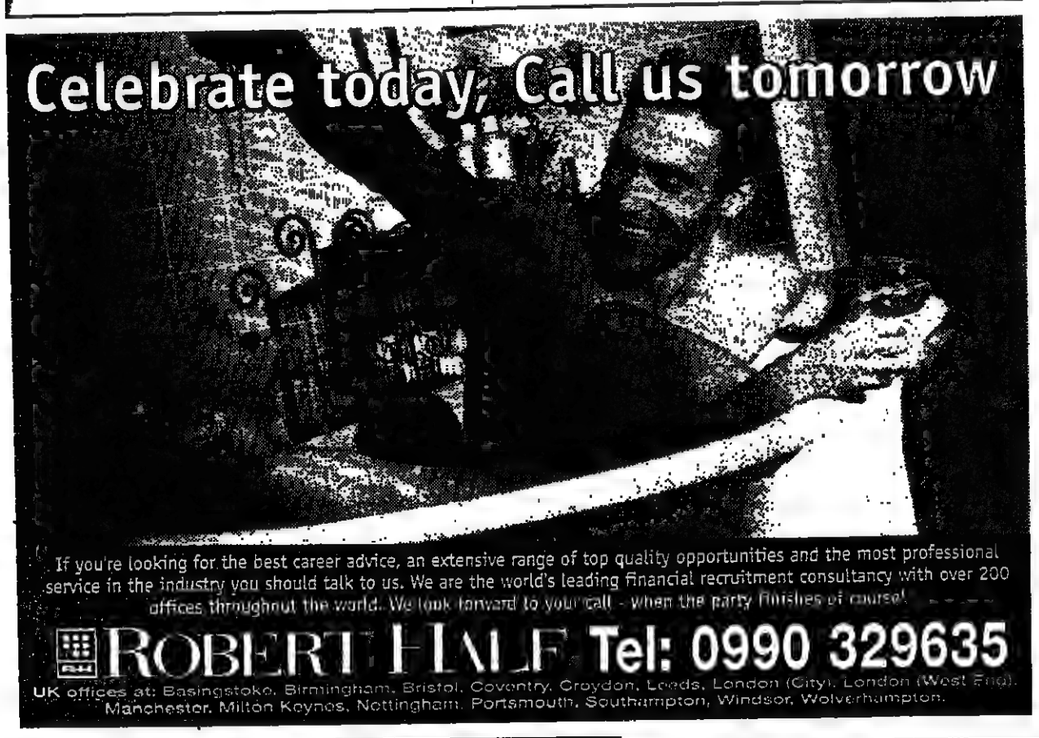

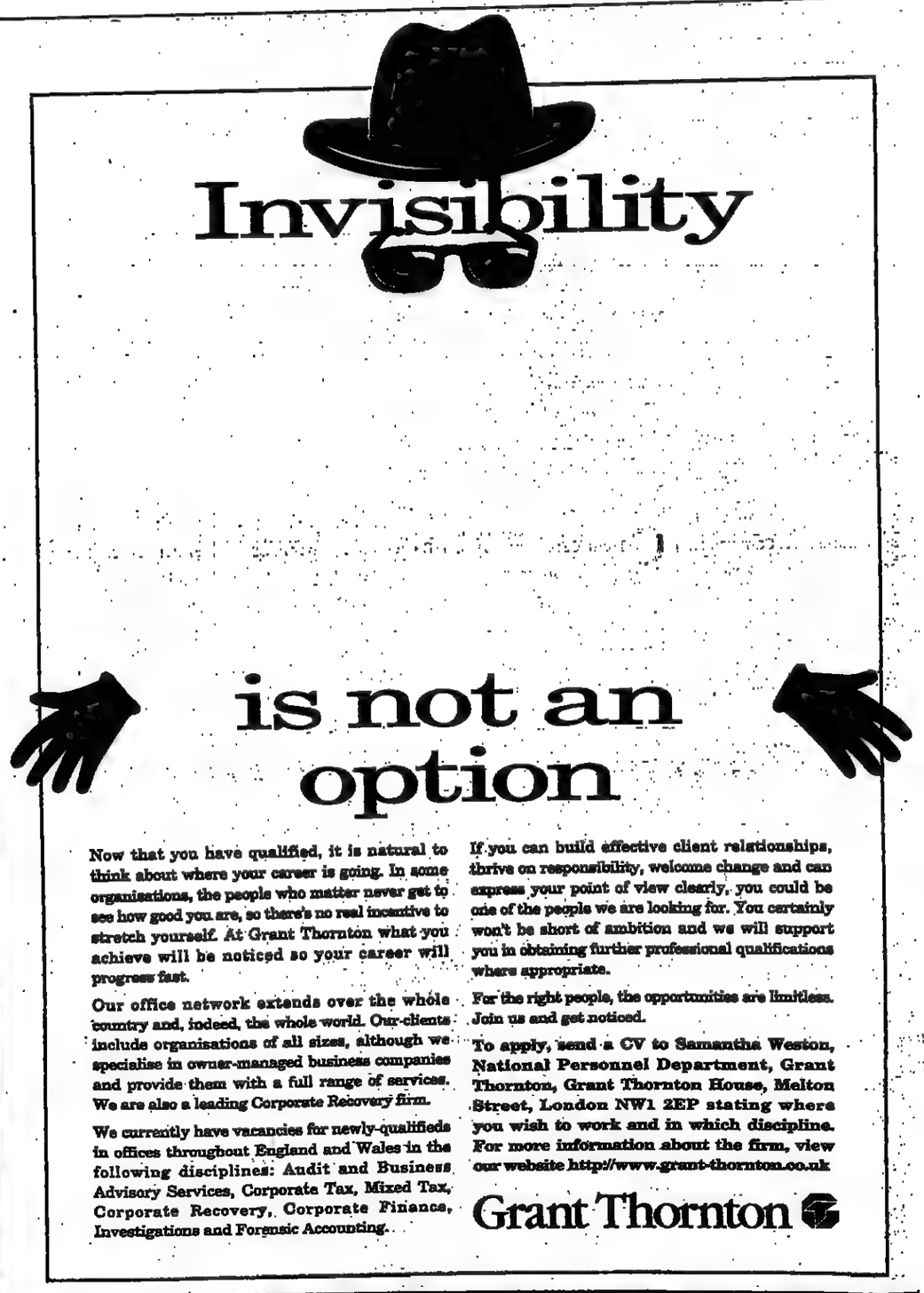

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Privy Council — Law Report January 24 1998 — Queen's Bench Division

Judge should not confide in jury

Mitchell v The Queen

Before Lord Goff of Chieveley, Lord Lloyd of Berwick, Lord Steyn, Lord Hope of Craighead and Mr Justice Gault

[Judgment January 21]

It was not proper for a trial judge, who after a voire dire conducted in the absence of the jury ruled that a defendant had *voluntarily made* a confession, to inform the jury of his ruling on that issue.

The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council so held in dismissing an appeal by the appellant, David Mitchell, from the dismissal by the Court of Appeal of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas of his appeal against his conviction on two counts of *murder*.

Mr Andrew Nichol, QC, Miss Quincy Whitaker, Mr Elliott Lockhart and Mr Wayne Munroe, the latter two of the Bahamian Bar, for the appellant; Mr Bernard Turner, Deputy Director of Legal Affairs, The Bahamas, and Mrs Cheryl Bethell, Crown Counsel, The Bahamas, for the Crown.

LORD STEYN said that the right of a defendant in appropriate circumstances to require a voire dire to be held in the absence of the jury was "an important rule which exists to protect accused persons" and a "very important safeguard": see *MacPherson v The Queen* ((1981) 147 CLR 512, 522); *Thongjai v The Queen* ([1998] AC 54).

A judge might not override that right by requiring a jury to stay if the defendant wanted them to be excused. The reason why the voire dire had to take place in the absence of the jury was that the jury should not be made aware of evidence which subsequently turned out to be inadmissible.

But the question now arose whether a judge, who ruled that a confession was voluntarily made, might properly inform the jury of his decision. *The decision on the* admissibility of a confession after a voire dire was the sole responsibility of the judge. There was no logical reason why the jury should know about his decision.

It was irrelevant to the consideration by the jury of the issues whether the confession was made and, if so, whether it was true. There was also no practical reason why the jury needed to be informed of the judge's decision. In modern English practice the judge's decision after a voire dire was never revealed to the jury.

Moreover, if the judge revealed his decision *to the jury, the risk of* unfair prejudice to an accused was created. In the typical case, of which the present was a paradigm, the decision of the judge on the voluntariness of the confession might convey to the jury that the *judge believed* the police witnesses and disbelieved the accused.

In a summing up a judge might, for the assistance of the jury, make tentative observations which could reflect adversely on the veracity of an accused. Provided that the judge did so in a fair and balanced way that was unobjectionable.

But that situation did not bear *comparison with the judge* informing the jury of his decision on the voluntariness of a statement. That would typically involve a concluded view on the credibility of the police and the accused.

The reason why it was wrong for a judge to reveal his decision to a jury was not because it would amount to a withdrawal of an issue *from the jury and it did not* amount to a misdirection.

The vice was that the knowledge by the jury that the judge had believed the police and disbelieved the accused created the potentiality of prejudice. A jury of laymen, or some of them, might be forgiven for saying "Well the judge did not believe the accused, why should we *believe him?*"

At the very least it created the risk that the jury, or some of them, might be diverted from grappling properly and independently with an accused's allegations of oppression so far as it was relevant to *their decision. And such an avoid*able risk of prejudice could not be tolerated in regard to a procedure designed to protect an accused.

In those circumstances, and relying particularly on the irrelevance of the judge's decision to the task of the jury taken together with the potentiality of prejudice created by informing the jury of the judge's decision, *their Lordships held that* the jury ought not to be informed of a judge's decision on a voire dire held to determine the admissibility of a confession. Any contrary practice in The Bahamas or elsewhere in the Caribbean ought to be discontinued.

It was primarily the responsibility of defence counsel to inform the prosecution and the judge in advance and in the absence of the jury of an intended objection to the admissibility of statements of an accused.

On the other hand, if the position remained unclear, counsel for the prosecution was under a duty to seek clarification of the position in the absence of the jury.

At the appropriate time, counsel had to ask the judge to request the jury to withdraw so that a matter could be raised on which the ruling of the judge was required. No discussion of an intended objection should take place in front of the jury. The judge should simply tell the jury that a matter had arisen *on which his ruling* was required and that they had to please retire for the time being.

When the voire dire had been completed, and the judge had given his ruling, the judge should give no explanation of the outcome of the voire dire to the jury.

Although in the present case the judge's explanation to the jury of *the decision to which he had come* on the voire dire was an irregularity, their Lordships were satisfied that the irregularity caused no injustice: the jury would inevitably have convicted the appellant. Their Lordships therefore recommended that the appeal should be dismissed.

Solicitors: Cameron McKenna; Charles Russell.

Limit to cover of insurance clause

Yasuda Fire and Marine Insurance Company of *Europe Ltd v Lloyd's Underwriting Syndicate No 229 and Others*

Before Mr Justice Cresswell

[Judgment January 16]

An aggregate extension clause in a *whole account excess of loss agree*ment, which protected the reinsured for liability incurred for "losses on risks covering on an aggregate basis" did not cover an underlying professional indemnity policy which was expressed to cover on a per claim basis but which contained an aggregate limit or an aggregate deductible *since it did not "cover on an* aggregate basis".

Accordingly, it was not open to the reinsured to add together causally unconnected losses which it had paid under any such underlying policy and to present *those losses to the reinsurer as one* loss.

Mr Justice Cresswell so held in a reserved judgment in the Commercial Court of the Queen's Bench Division, in dismissing an appeal brought by Yasuda Fire and Marine Insurance Company Ltd under section 1(2) of the Arbitration Act 1979 against the interim award of Sir Michael Kerr, Mr John Butler and Mr Van Vechten Veeder, QC, dated October 15, 1997 in an arbitration between Yasuda and the syndicates. The appeal was brought with the consent of the syndicates.

Mr Ian Hunter, QC and Mr Peter Hayward for Yasuda; Mr Christopher Butcher for the syndicates.

MR JUSTICE CRESSWELL said that the syndicates reinsured Yasuda by various whole account excess of loss agreements each of which contained an aggregate extension clause. Yasuda was a *participant in professional indem*nity line slips arranged by J. H. Minet & Co Ltd. Various primary and excess policies of insurance binding upon Yasuda were issued under Minet professional indemnity (MIPI) line slips to firms of accountants and lawyers.

The issue in the appeal was whether for the purposes of *determining the liability of the* syndicates under the excess of loss agreements, Yasuda was entitled to add together causally unconnected losses which it had paid under any particular MIPI policy and to present those losses to the *syndicates as one loss.*

Yasuda would be so entitled if the underlying MIPI policy was to be regarded as a policy "covering on an aggregate basis" within the meaning of the first paragraph of the extension clause. The arbitrators concluded that *the MIPI* policies were not policies "covering on an aggregate basis", with the *result that Yasuda could not add* together causally unconnected losses and present them as a single loss.

In *Denby v Marchant* ([1996] LRLR 301), the only reported case on the first paragraph of the aggregate *extension clause*, Mr Justice Waller held that the MIPI policies were policies "covering on an aggregate basis". In reaching their conclusion, the arbitrators declined to follow Mr Justice Waller in *Denby*, although they acknowledged at paragraph 13 of their award that it was "a reserved judgment on almost identical *wording in similar factual* circumstances".

The aggregate extension clause provided, inter alia: "(1) As regards liability incurred by the reinsured for losses on risks covering on an aggregate basis, if required by the reinsured, this reinsurance shall protect the reinsured excess of the amounts as provided for herein in *the aggregate any one such* aggregate loss up to the limit of indemnity as provided for herein in all any one such aggregate loss."

As to the first paragraph of the clause, the critical phrase "losses on risks covering on an aggregate *basis*" meant "losses on risks under policies and/or contracts reinsured hereby covering on an aggregate basis". Such underlying policies/contracts had to be equated with the reference in the second paragraph of the clause to "*all* aggregate policies or contracts coming within the scope of this protection. . ."

Yasuda had contended that a policy covered on an aggregate basis if the adding together of losses, whether or not causally connected had to be carried out in order to determine if and when the policy began to pay, for example where there was an aggregate deductible which first had to be exhausted, or where the policy ceased to pay, for example where there was an aggregate limit to the insurer's liability.

The syndicates contended that where an underlying policy responded on a per claim basis, the clause did not allow them to be added *up to constitute one loss* under the reinsurances. An aggregate deductible or an aggregate limit did not determine the basis of the cover provided irrespective of the other terms, but simply represented the monetary bands above or below which there was no cover.

His Lordship said that the risks under the MIPI policies covered on *an each and every claim basis.* Neither a limit nor a deductible provided a basis of cover as referred to in the first paragraph of the clause

It was necessary to emphasise that the case was concerned with *whole account reinsurances of the* whole range of Yasuda's book. True it was that the aggregate extension clause was limited to liability business only, but that expression plainly included product liability business and it was clear that the origins of aggregate extension clauses were found in the field of product liability.

His *Lordship agreed with the* arbitrators that the product liability policy quoted in *Denby* (at p307) was probably an example of a policy/contract covering on an aggregate basis.

Solicitors: Lovell White Durrant; Lawrence Graham.

ACCOUNTANCY RESULTS

Institute of Chartered Accountants' list of referrals

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Wakefield S J, London, CS; Walker J A, London, CS; Walker R P, London, CS; Walsh D J, Leicester, AT; Walters J D, London, CS; Warner C, Stevenage, AT; Waters A R, London, BFM; Watkins P R D, London, BFM; Watson M, Birmingham, BFM; Watson W J, Bristol, AT; Whalley S G, Liverpool, CS; White C J, Plymouth, CS; White J V, Warrington, BFM; Wilkins C J, London, CS; Wilkinson D R, Birmingham, CS; Williams A M, Leeds, CS; Williams M L, Leeds, AT; Williams Robert David (3088), Chester, AT; Willingham D F, London, BFM; Willshaw K V, Stoke-On-Trent, CS; Wilson C I, London, CS; Wilson C J, Eastbourne, AFR; Wilson O E, London, AT; Wilson S D, Liverpool, CS; Wilson V M, London, CS; Windsor J J, Royston, AT; Winkworth S R, Harrow, CS; Winstanley C E, Liverpool, CS; Wise A T, London, AT; Wiseman E J, Bath, CS; Witt N J, Bristol, BFM; Witt W R T, London, CS; Woodward P M, Southampton, CS; Wrafter M P, London, BFM; Wyatt J R, London, AFR

Yates G, Birmingham, AT; Yeap C K H, Manchester, AT; Young R P, London, AT

Zaharia V S, Nicosia, AFR

A total of 2,706 candidates sat the Final Examination last month and 1,634 passed, an overall pass rate of 60 per cent (62 per cent in December 1996): 1,736 candidates sat the full exam for the first time.

Chartered accountants successful examination candidates continued

Continued from page 45

Smith Z J, Croydon; Smithies J A, Birmingham; Smyth N E, London; Smyth N R, Jersey; Sodhi A S, London; Southall P J, Birmingham; Southby P J, Nottingham; Spargo N E, Birmingham; Sparks D H, London; Speakman P J, Manchester; Spencer A R, Reading; Spiby P F, Birmingham; Spinks K A, Nottingham; Spooner T M, London; Spyrou C A, London; Spyrou S, Nicosia; Stacey J N S C, Hertford; Stafford R S, Bristol; Stapleton B J, St Albans; Starkey M R, Ipswich; Starkey T A V, St Albans; Stavrou A P, London; Staziker D J, Cardiff; Staziker G M, Manchester; Stead S P, Preston; Stedmon H W, Nottingham; Steel J W A, London; Steele G D, High Wycombe; Steele S N, London; Steele V, Chorley; Stephens C, Liverpool; Stephens M E, Guildford; Stephenson R J, London; Stevens K S, London; Stevenson D M, London; Stevenson R, Crawley; Steward C E, London; Stewart L C, London; Stewart M A, Sutton; Stewart R, Guernsey; Stockhausen M D, London; Stokes T J L, London; Stone A R I, London; Stone K D, London; Stonehouse F C, London; Stork N, Cardiff; Stott J M, London; Strachan I J, Waltham Cross; Strathdee N J, Guildford; Strong M J F, Swindon; Strong P J C, London; Stuttard L R R, London; Styan A J, Birmingham; Suckling D J, Bristol; Summers M, Preston; Sumner P A, Manchester; Sutcliffe S, Birmingham; Sutherland A C, London

Svanen C, London; Swaffield I N, London; Swales I R, London; Swattridge P J, London; Sweiss N S, Bradford; Szolnoki F L, Nottingham

Tadros N, London; Takano M A, London; Takhar K, Birmingham; Talbot D G, Watford; Tan L K W, Milton Keynes; Tan S E F, Cardiff; Tan W T, Leeds; Tang E, Southampton; Tang J, London; Tankaria R, London; Tanter J B, London; Tarrant K L, Ewell; Tattersall C D, London; Tavener P M, London; Taylor A J, Winchester; Taylor C L, London; Taylor C P, London; Taylor E C, Birmingham; Taylor G B F, Newcastle upon Tyne; Taylor L, Harrogate; Taylor L Y, Manchester; Taylor M J V, London; Taylor S L, Nottingham; Taylor S, Southampton; Taylor S R, Milton Keynes; Taylor S I, London; Taylor S J, Nottingham; Teasdale I S, London; Temple J P E, London; Teo Y P, London; Terrett B J, Hitchin; Tettamanzi F G A, London; Tham C N, London; Theed A J, London; Theodosiou M A, London; Thomas A J, Manchester; Thomas A P, London; Thomas J M, London; Thomas K M, London; Thomas T C F, London; Thompson D R, Ipswich; Thompson L M, Manchester; Thompson S L, Manchester; Thomson G C, London; Thorne M, Bristol; Thorpe D L, Nottingham; Thwaites R J, Workington; Tiffin P, London; Tilley E J, Newbury; Tillyer D J, Reading; Tingle S J, London; Tivnan S E, Manchester; Todd E M, London; Tolley M D R, Birmingham; Tomsett R J, London; Toner D C, Sale; Tooth S D, Norwich; Topham M R M, London

Tott A J, London; Totten J L, London; Totterdill P R, Guildford; Toulson S M, St Albans; Towers H E, London; Townend J K, London; Toynton L M, London; Trevor C J, Dunstable; Trivedi K, London; Troughton S E, Nottingham; Truesdale N J, London; Tucker J A, Bath; Tulley M J C, London; Tunnell N B, London; Tunstall J L, London; Turnbull M, London; Turner A P, Bradford; Turner C J, Woodford Green; Turner D D, Norwich; Turner E E, Shrewsbury; Turner K L, London; Turner M S K, London; Turner M P, London; Turner M E, Newcastle Upon Tyne; Turney M J, Leicester; Turnor M K, Leeds; Tutin R P, Bristol; Twite M R, London; Tyler D E, St Albans; Tyler N C, London; Tyrer P D, Leicester

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Wachuka M, London; Walt M J A, London; Waite P M, London; Walby M D, London; Waldren C E, Southampton; Walker D M, London; Walker F H, London; Walmsley L S, Grimsby; Walsh A, Birmingham; Walters D M, Bridgend; Walton S E, Manchester; Ward G A, London; Ward J M, Hemel Hempstead; Ward M D, London; Ward M, London; Ware M, Crawley; Warlow N S, Cardiff; Warner I, Leeds

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Lord Chief Justice's Court

Law Report January 24 1998

Courts to explain effect of sentence

Practice Direction (Custodial sentences: Explanations)

Because statutory provisions governing the practical effect of custodial sentences, such as the actual period to be served and conditions applicable on release, were not widely understood by the general public, in future, the court should explain its practical effect so as to ensure that it was understood by the offender, any victim and any member of the public present in court or who read a full report of the case.

Lord Bingham of Cornhill, Lord Chief Justice, so stated when handing down a practice direction in the Lord Chief Justice's Court with Mr Justice Garland and Mr Justice Rix on January 22.

THE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE said that the practical effect of custodial sentences imposed by the courts was almost entirely governed by statutory provisions. Those statutory provisions, changed by Parliament from time to time, were not widely understood by the general public.

It was desirable that when sentence was passed the practical effect of the sentence should be understood by the defendant, any victim and any member of the public who was present in court or read a full report of the proceedings.

In future, whenever a custodial sentence was imposed on an offender, the court should explain the practical effect of the sentence in addition to complying with existing statutory requirements. That would be no more than an explanation; the sentence would be that pronounced by the court.

Sentencers should give the explanation in terms of their own choosing, taking care to ensure that the explanation was clear and accurate. No form of words was prescribed. Annexed were short statements which might, adapted as necessary, be of value as models.

Those statements were based on the statutory provisions in force on January 1, 1998 and would of course *require modification if* those provisions were materially amended.

Sentencers would continue to give such explanation as they judged necessary of ancillary orders relating to matters such as disqualification, compensation, confiscation, costs and so on.

Forms of words

Forms of words were provided for use where the offender would be: 1 A short term prisoner not subject to licence; 2 A short term prisoner subject to licence; 3 A long term prisoner; 4 Subject to a discretionary sentence of life *imprisonment*.

Sentencers would bear in mind that where an offender was sentenced to terms which were consecutive, or wholly or partly concurrent, they were to be treated as a single term: see section 51(2) of the Criminal Justice Act 1991.

1 Total term less than 12 months

"The sentence is [. . .] months. You will serve half that sentence in prison/a young offender institution. After that time the rest of your sentence will be suspended and you will be released. Your release will not bring this sentence to an end.

"If after your release and before the end of the period covered by the sentence you commit any further offence, you may be ordered to return to custody to serve the balance of the original sentence outstanding at the date of the further offence, as well as being punished for that new offence.

"Any time you have spent on remand in custody in connection with the offence[s] for which you are now being sentenced will count as part of the sentence to be served, unless it has already been counted."

2 Total term of 12 months and less than 4 years

"The sentence is [. . .] [months/years]. You will serve half that sentence in a prison/a young offender institution. After that time the rest of your sentence will be suspended and you will be released. Your release will not bring this sentence to an end.

"If after your release and before *the end of the period covered by the* sentence you commit any further offence you may be ordered to return to custody to serve the balance of the original sentence outstanding at the date of the further offence, as well as being punished for that new offence.

"Any time you have spent on remand in custody in connection with the offence[s] for which you are now being sentenced will count as part of the sentence to be served, unless it has already been counted.

"After your release you will also be subject to supervision on licence until the end of three-quarters of the total sentence."

[If an order has been made under section 44 of the Criminal Justice Act 1991: "After your release you will also be subject to supervision on licence for the remainder of the sentence."]

"If you fail to comply with any of the requirements of your licence then again you may be brought before a court which will have power to suspend your licence and order your return to custody."

3 Total term of 4 years or more

"The sentence is [. . .] [years/months]. Your case will not be considered by the Parole Board until you have served at least half that period in custody. Unless the Parole Board recommends earlier release, you will not be released until you have served two-thirds of that sentence. Your release will not bring the sentence to an end.

"Instead, the remainder will be suspended. If after your release and before the end of the period covered by the sentence you commit any further offence you may be ordered to return to custody to serve the balance of the original sentence outstanding at the date of the new offence, as well as being punished for that new offence.

"Any time you have spent in custody on remand in connection with the offence[s] for which you are now being sentenced will count as part of the sentence to be served, unless it has already been counted.

"After your release you will also be subject to supervision on licence until the end of three-quarters of the total sentence."

[If an order has been made under section 44 of the Criminal Justice Act 1991: "After your release you will also be subject to supervision on licence for the remainder of the sentence."]

"You will be liable to be recalled to prison if your licence is revoked, either on the recommendation of the Parole Board, or, if it is thought expedient in the public interest, by the secretary of state."

4 Discretionary life sentence

"The sentence of the court is life imprisonment/custody for life/detention for life under section 53(2)(3) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933. For the purposes of section 28 of the Crime (Sentences) Act 1997 the court specifies a period of [x] years. That means that your case will not be considered by the Parole Board until you have served at least [x] years in custody.

"After that time the Parole Board will be entitled to consider your release. When it is satisfied that you need no longer be confined in custody for the protection of the public it will be able to direct your release. Until it is so satisfied you will remain in custody.

"If you are released, it will be on terms that you are subject to a licence for the rest of your life and liable to be recalled to prison at any time if your licence is revoked, either on the recommendation of the Parole Board, or, if it is thought expedient in the public interest, by the secretary of state."

Bail Act time limit must be strictly observed

Regina v Governor of Glen Parva Young Offenders Institution, Ex parte G

Before Lord Justice Simon Brown and Mr Justice Mance

[Judgment January 14]

It was an absolute requirement of section 7(4)(a) of the Bail Act 1976 that a person arrested for breach of bail conditions or other condition in section 7(3), was to be brought before a justice of the peace within 24 hours of that arrest. It was not satisfied by a person being brought into the precincts of a magistrates' court within 24 hours and after the 24-hour limit being brought before a bench of magistrates.

Since there was no power to detain him in custody under section 7(5) because of the failure to comply with section 7(4), the person so arrested was automatically entitled to his liberty.

The Queen's Bench Divisional Court so held, granting a declaration in terms of the judgment to G, aged 17, on an application for a writ of habeas corpus.

The applicant had been arrested for breach of bail conditions and brought to the cells of Grantham Magistrates' Court within 24 hours. He was not brought before a justice until two hours after the expiry of the 24-hour time limit, when he was brought before a bench of magistrates.

The magistrates' clerk took the view that there had been sufficient compliance with section 7(4) of the 1976 Act and accordingly the applicant was remanded in custody. He applied for habeas corpus.

Mr Jeremy Roussak for the applicant; Mr Ian Ashford-Thom for the Crown.

LORD JUSTICE SIMON BROWN said that the plain wording of section 7(4) meant what it said. It required that a detainee be brought not merely to the court precincts but before a justice of the peace within 24 hours of arrest. It might be a single justice rather than a whole bench of magistrates.

The consequences of the failure to comply with section 7(4)(a), particularly when a detainee was brought before magistrates out of time, was that the detainee ought automatically to be set at liberty. His continuing detention was unlawful.

For the justices' jurisdiction under section 7(5) to arise, section 7(4) must have been *faithfully* complied with. The police had no more than the 24 hours stipulated by Parliament to bring a detainee into the presence of a justice. If they failed it was quite wrong to overlook that failure and allow his detention on the same basis.

Mr Justice Mance agreed.

Solicitors: Bird & Co, Grantham; Treasury Solicitor.

House of Lords

Pay difference not through sex bias

Strathclyde Regional Council and Others v Wallace and Others

Before Lord Browne-Wilkinson, Lord Steyn, Lord Hoffmann, Lord Hope of Craighead and Lord Clyde

[Speeches January 22]

If a difference in pay between men and women was explained by genuine factors not tainted by sex discrimination, that was sufficient to raise a valid defence under section 1(3) of the Equal Pay Act 1970 and there was no further burden on the employer to justify the situation.

The House of Lords so held in dismissing an appeal by women teachers employed by Strathclyde Regional Council against a decision of the Second Division of the Inner House of the Court of Session (Lord Justice Clerk (Lord Ross), Lord Weir and Lord Cowie) which had overturned the Employment Appeal Tribunal and the industrial tribunal. The Second Division had held that the council had established a defence under section 1(3) of the 1970 Act in an action brought by the teachers claiming equality of pay.

The women teachers did the same work as principal teachers but were paid at a lower rate. They had selected a male comparator who was a principal teacher employed by the council and claimed equal pay with him. However, of the unpromoted teachers claiming to be carrying out the work of a principal teacher, the majority were men.

Section 1 of the 1970 Act provides: "(3) An equality clause shall not operate in relation to a variation between the woman's contract and the man's contract if the employer proved that the variation is genuinely due to a material factor which is not the difference of sex. . ."

Mr David Pannick, QC and Mr Peter Grant-Hutchison, of the Scots Bar, for the appellants; Mr Ian Truscott, QC, of the Scots Bar, and Ms Tess Gill for the respondent.

LORD BROWNE-WILKINSON said that the industrial tribunal had apparently accepted a submission that, in order for the respondent to succeed in a subsection (3) defence, it was necessary to analyse the reasons for the disparity in pay between the appellants and principal teachers in order to establish whether such reasons justified the disparity.

Only if the industrial tribunal had been satisfied that the respondents had no reasonable alternative but to require the appellants to do the work of a principal teacher for less pay would it have been prepared to hold that the respondents had justified such disparity and therefore have a subsection (3) defence.

The five factors identified by the industrial tribunal were genuine reasons for there being a difference *between the pay of the appellants* and that of principal teachers. They were also significant and causally relevant factors leading to that disparity. They did not relate to sex in any way but concerned policy, financial constraints and a promotion structure established by statute.

Therefore, on any straightforward application of the section, the respondents had established a subsection (3) defence. There was nothing in the words of the subsection which required the employer to justify the factors giving rise to the disparity by showing that there was no way in which the employer could have avoided such disparity if he had adopted other measures.

The industrial tribunal wrongly thought that the authorities demanded such justification in every case where an employer sought to establish a subsection (3) defence whereas, on a proper reading, the question of justification only arose where a factor relied upon was gender discriminatory.

Although in the instant case there was no question of gender discrimination, the authorities were in such a state of confusion that it was desirable for the House to seek to establish the law on a clear and sound basis.

Both the Sex Discrimination Act 1971 and article 119 of the EC Treaty recognised two types of sex discrimination: First, there was direct discrimination, that is, a detriment suffered by women which they would not have suffered but for being women. Second, there was indirect discrimination, that is, a detriment suffered by a class of individuals, men and women alike, but the class was such that a substantially larger number of women than men suffered the detriment.

Under the 1971 Act direct sexual discrimination was always unlawful. But both under the 1971 Act and under article 119, indirect discrimination was not unlawful if it was justified.

The 1970 Act had to be construed so far as possible to work harmoniously both with the 1971 Act and article 119. A sexually discriminatory practice would not be fatal to a subsection defence if the employer could justify it applying the test in *Bilka-Kaufhaus GmbH v Weber von Hartz* (Case 170/84) ([1987] ICR 110). In *North Yorkshire County Council v Ratcliffe* ([1995] ICR 833, 839) the House had expressed the view, obiter, that the 1970 Act had to be interpreted without introducing the distinction between direct and indirect discrimination drawn by section 1 of the 1971 Act. That dictum should not be carried too far.

While there was no need to apply to the 1970 Act the hard and fast statutory distinction between the two types of discrimination drawn in the 1971 Act, the House did not intend, and had no power, to sweep away all the law on equal pay under article 119 laid down by the European Court of Justice, including the concept of justifying on *Bilka* ground practices which *had a discriminatory effect* on pay and conditions of service.

The law on article 119, while recognising that in many cases there was a de facto distinction between direct and indirect *discrimination, did not* draw the same firm legal demarcation between the two as did the 1971 Act which permitted justification of indirect discrimination but not of direct discrimination.

The correct position under section 1(3) of the 1970 Act was that even where the variation was genuinely due to a factor which involved the difference of sex, the employer could establish a valid defence under subsection (3) if he could justify such differentiation on the ground of sex whether the differentiation was direct or indirect.

His Lordship was unaware of any case as yet in which the European Court of Justice had held that a directly discriminatory practice could be justified in the *Bilka* sense.

It was thus apparent that in considering section 1(3) of the 1970 Act the only circumstances in which questions of justification could arise were those in which the employer was relying on a factor which was sexually discriminatory. There was no question of *the employer having to justify, in* the *Bilka* sense, all disparities of pay.

Provided that there was no element of sexual discrimination, the employer established a *subsection (3) defence by identifying* the factors which he alleged had caused the disparity, proving that those factors were genuine and proving further that they were causally relevant to the disparity in pay complained of.

Mr Pannick submitted that the industrial tribunal was right to consider whether the factors relied upon, even though not gender related, justified the disparity in pay. He submitted that for a factor to be a material factor within subsection (3) it had to be demonstrated that the matters relied upon unavoidably led to the disparity in pay.

His Lordship could not accept that. The words of the subsection indicated no requirement of such a justification inherent in the use of the words "material factor".

It had long been established by *Rainey v Greater Glasgow Health Board* ([1987] AC 224, 235) that a factor was material if it was "significant and relevant": a test which looked to the reason why there was a disparity in pay not whether there was an excuse for such disparity.

If one were to accept Mr Pannick's submission that would be to turn the Equal Pay Act into a "fair wages" Act requiring the elimination of disparity in wages even though such disparity had nothing to do with sex discrimination. The preamble to the Act rendered such an argument impossible.

The law was correctly stated by Mr Justice Mummery in *Tyldesley v TML Plastics Ltd* ([1996] ICR 356). The purpose of section 1 of the Equal Pay Act 1970 was to eliminate sex discrimination in pay and not to achieve fair wages.

Therefore, if a difference in pay was explained by *genuine factors* not tainted by discrimination, that was sufficient to raise a valid defence under subsection (3); in such a case there was no further burden on the employer to justify anything.

However, if the factor explaining the disparity in pay was tainted by sex discrimination, whether direct or indirect, that would be fatal to a defence under subsection (3) unless such discrimination could be objectively justified in accordance with the tests laid down in the *Bilka* and *Rainey* cases.

Lord Steyn, Lord Hoffmann, Lord Hope and Lord Clyde agreed.

Solicitors: Lawrence Graham for Robson McLean, Edinburgh; Lewis Silkin for Simpson & Marwick, Edinburgh.

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Class wars in the great outdoors

DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION

Peter Barnard

The great outdoors remains what it always was: a bracing and pleasant place to be if you enjoy that kind of thing. Although organised holidays and activity-filled weekends are comparatively recent innovations, people have been enjoying the amenities provided by nature for a very long time and at very little cost.

It also used to be the great leveller — where one of the attractions was a complete absence of social division. Voices may have been a giveaway, but in terms of appearance, an earl and a pauper could share a fishing platform without embarrassment.

Most people would probably agree that Britain is now a more egalitarian place than it has ever been, but I am not so sure. We are certainly less divided by class, but leisure has become one of the areas where many people seem determined to advertise their financial comfort at every opportunity. They do it with clothing labels.

I was browsing through a cycling magazine this week, and one of the most notable things about the advertisements and the editorial was the way it encouraged people to buy equipment as a badge of status.

Other than walking or breathing, it is hard to think of a simpler activity than cycling. Yet now, in order to sell ever-more sophisticated equipment, the cycling industry behaves as if it was involved in deep-space exploration. The research becomes a key part of the snobbery: buy this — it has been tested to destruction. If you own this product, you are obviously a discerning and thorough person.

One of the features in the magazine concerned winter gloves. Sorry, winter cycling gloves. Most of us probably think we can buy a pair of gloves that will keep us warm without the benefit of a major high-tech investigation. But no, some sort of heat-seeking device had been used to demonstrate on a computer (what else?) that some gloves retain heat better.

The winning manufacturer in this test of cycling gloves (when you get off the bike you change into walking gloves) just happened to produce the most expensive pair. They cost the best part of £30, which happens to be the price of a second hand adult bicycle advertised in my local newsagent's recently. This seems very apt: the cycling world divides neatly between people who will spend £30 on the bicycle and those who will spend £30 on the gloves.

Cycling is far from the only leisure activity where having the right label on the equipment sets you apart from the crowd. Have you ever considered buying one of those sailing jackets? There are cheaper boats. Certain manufacturers have the sort of cachet in sailing that Ralph Lauren enjoys on the catwalk, therefore they charge an enormous mark-up. Some marinas no longer have clothing shops, they have boutiques. Ask them for "something to keep out the wet" and they will suspect you of coming from somewhere below the salt.

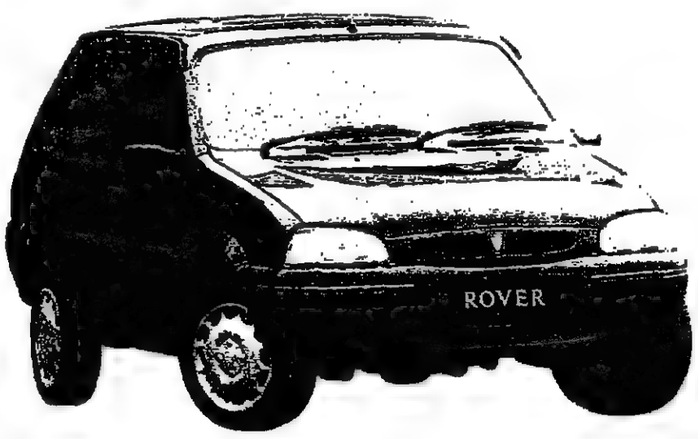
Golf, which I am now trying to learn, is another activity where labels speak volumes. A recent golfing magazine test of wet-weather gear included a chart showing how quiet the material was when you swung a five iron. Soon golf clubs will start to subject jackets to a decibel test before they let you on the course.

This trend to make leisure into a means test is very regrettable. Fifty years ago people used to sail oceans single-handed without the benefit of a wind-tunnel-tested jacket carrying a fancy French label. Fifty years ago people cycled up hill and down dale without calling in Hardy Amies to fit them with trousers.

I think part of the blame lies in the modern workplace, where open-plan offices and other egalitarian innovations have tended to reduce the overt status of some managers. Devoid of their own room and a thicker carpet than the next chap, they restore their self-esteem with designer labels on their walking jackets. They still get wet, but they pay more to get wet than we do.

Any rush to buy the very last Metro?

Rover is sending BL's only baby down the tube, says **Kevin Eason**



Metro, left, was intended to replace the Mini. But the renamed Rover 100 did not age well

It was the last link with the worst days of British industry, when strikes and shutdowns almost wrecked the nation's biggest motor manufacturer.

The Metro was the saviour of the flailing nationalised conglomerate of BL, but after 17 years it has been killed off, overtaken by time and the talents of younger models flooding on to the market. Rover stopped making the Metro, now called the Rover 100, over Christmas though a few are still in showrooms.

Ironically, the Austin Metro was launched to replace the ageing Mini. While the Metro's assembly lines, the first in Britain to use robots, are silent, the 39-year-old Mini will still be churned out until the end of the century.

Rover — the name that replaced BL in 1986 — sold more than two million Metros, though the car never found a place in the hearts of motorists the way the Mini did.

But its life almost mirrored a changing Britain: created during an epic period of industrial unrest by a crumbling state conglomerate, launched into a second industrial revolution created in the Thatcher years and now dying at a time when the British motor industry has never been stronger.

The fact that the Metro was made at all is remarkable enough, for it came as British Leyland, the nation's biggest motor manufacturer, was hurtling towards the scrapheap.

BL was an amalgam of famous names from Austin and Morris to Standard, Triumph and Jaguar. But industrial unrest, fomented by militant shop stewards, coupled with appalling productivity and cars as stylish as clogs almost finished the business.

The ill-fated Austin Allegro and Morris Marina were the company's somewhat dubious high points in the Seventies as output plummeted and strikes left BL's factories closed more often than open.

A South African businessman, Michael Edwardes, was appointed to try to save the group. He immediately ordered a replacement for the lacklustre and then nearly 20-year-old Mini.

To get the car made, though, he had to sack Derek Robinson, the controversial hard-left convenor at the huge Longbridge plant in Birmingham, virtually on the orders of the newly elected Conservative Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, who was willing to barter with £450 million worth of aid.

Unrest was on a scale now unknown, with strikes and closures dominating each day's headlines. And the costs were appalling: in five years of Sir Michael's reign, the company lost £1 million a day; while the workforce of 195,000 he took over numbers fewer than 30,000 today.

When the Metro was given the go-ahead, government money paid for the first automated car assembly line in the country at Longbridge using robots while the workers were also taking part in a first: payment by results. They were on bonus for the number of cars they produced instead of the old system of fixed wages, when they were paid regardless of whether they were on strike or drinking tea.

On October 8, 1980, the Metro appeared to worldwide acclaim. It was the first car that hundreds of thousands of learners drove — after BSM, the nation's biggest driving school, ordered Metros for its fleet.

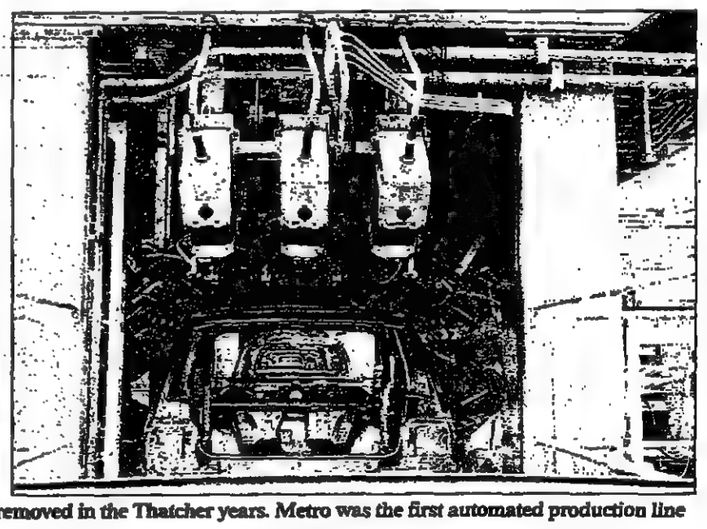
Unfortunately, it was both a first for BL — and the last. Sir Michael signed a collaboration deal with Honda of Japan to make cars under licence. The next model a year later from BL was the Triumph Acclaim, effectively a Honda though made at Longbridge, and the start of a generation of Japanese-designed cars.

Rover — introduced by Sir Graham Day — tried to kill off the Metro but there was no replacement ready, while the Mini refused to die, continuing to sell in relatively small numbers.

The now-renamed Rover 100 was overtaken by more modern models from the continent and Japan, even dumped by BSM for the more up-to-date Vauxhall Corsa.

When BMW bought Rover three years ago, German executives conducting their first appraisal decided that time was up for the venerable little car and ordered its end from Christmas, even preferring to do without a mainstream small model than soldier on with a car effectively two decades old.

Some stocks will remain on sale for the next few weeks but Rover said this week: "It is goodbye to a car that is an important part of this company's history and which will be remembered by millions of motorists in this country."



Robbo to robots: strike-conveners such as Derek Robinson were removed in the Thatcher years. Metro was the first automated production line

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5280 AH	8 BAY	514 CLR	DNO 835	621 DNO	8 FPE	889 GOW	HMO 249	15 JJ	6 KKO	5617 KMA	111 LAW	14 MAE	794 PAF	59 RJ	889 SMM	917 TTU	WBK 453
813 AJC	759 BBO	CNO 579	DNR 835	292 DOP	935 FPK	889 GOW	HMN 2V	JJU 636	2 KKR	KMH 418	LBO 315	NJR 1	PAM 57	489 RKJ	BOJ 1	TVA 84	WDA 65
A1 AKG	7 BBO	CRL 927	DNR 673	12 ERI	92 FPT	889 GOW	HNN 2V	JKA 856	KMH 418	LBO 315	LIW 3	NJR 1	PAZ 1801	46 RKK	82 BOO	TYA 84	WDK 56
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72 ALJ	R444 BOB	969 COR	DPH 784B	1 EMU 759	FPO 488	GTS 268	HNO 226	JKL 55	KOW 789	LCB 514	LJK 28	NJR 1	PDG 451	227 RMD	SRR 963	TYN 836	912 WDV
AN 9646	570 BCU	911 COS	DPO 673	292 EMU	FPO 488	GTS 268	HNO 226	JKL 55	KOW 789	LCB 514	LJK 28	NJR 1	PHA 646	804 RMF	SSV 983	50 U	WEB 967
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MBS6AMN	BPG 100	CDY 317	DPO 673	292 EMU	FPO 488	GTS 268	HNO 226	JKL 55	KOW 789	LCB 514	LJK 28	NJR 1	PFD 47	FNN7 964	SUN 297	97 UEA	14 WG
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ADA 701	BPV 316	CPO 539	DSU 494	1017 EV	28 EVE	889 GOW	HNO 226	JKL 55	KOW 789	LCB 514	LJK 28	NJR 1	PKK 473	9849 RO	SVC 302	UH 8598	WHV 754
559 ADU	50 BR	927 CRV	604 DTJ	780 EMO	42 OA	889 GOW	HNO 226	JKL 55	KOW 789	LCB 514	LJK 28	NJR 1	PO 885	FOD 895	3VV 20	UHN 278	WJJ 840
APG 309	36 BRL	17 CS	1554 DU	318 EWR	59 EYV	889 GOW	HNO 226	JKL 55	KOW 789	LCB 514	LJK 28	NJR 1	PGG 606	ROH 912	SWA 657	UJ 772	WK 47
1919 AR	BRO 914	686 DTH	291 EMU	1017 EV	42 OA	889 GOW	HNO 226	JKL 55	KOW 789	LCB 514	LJK 28	NJR 1	PHA 646	ROI 8	SWR 414	ULN 831	WKE 61
861 ARB	BRR 775	7 CSP	904 DTJ	780 EMO	42 OA	889 GOW	HNO 226	JKL 55	KOW 789	LCB 514	LJK 28	NJR 1	PHN 167	JBO ROY	SXM 646	UNG 745	882 WKE
ARG 863	79 BRY	1 CSP	175 DVF	292 EMU	FPO 488	GTS 268	HNO 226	JKL 55	KOW 789	LCB 514	LJK 28	NJR 1	RPD 804	775 SYC	23 TA	537 UP	UNR 879
469 ARG	4086 DW	513 CTA	604 DTJ	780 EMO	42 OA	889 GOW	HNO 226	JKL 55	KOW 789	LCB 514	LJK 28	NJR 1	RPH 1	325 RPJ	23 TA	537 UP	WKK 617
ARY 632	48 DWN	CTS 723	209 CTA	513 CTA	8 OWN	889 GOW	HNO 226	JKL 55	KOW 789	LCB 514	LJK 28	NJR 1	RPN 818	TAA 324	UPR 430	WKT 72	
ASJ 504	865 DWN	BTK 46	235 CTT	780 EMO	42 OA	889 GOW	HNO 226	JKL 55	KOW 789	LCB 514	LJK 28	NJR 1	RPV 114	643 TAF	URJ 283	3 WL	
30 AV	863 BTR	497 CUE	604 DTJ	780 EMO	42 OA	889 GOW	HNO 226	JKL 55	KOW 789	LCB 514	LJK 28	NJR 1	RTV 111	TAH 53	UTM 4	WLH 800	
A15 AWF	603 BTR	822 CUP	1554 DU	780 EMO	42 OA	889 GOW	HNO 226	JKL 55	KOW 789	LCB 514	LJK 28	NJR 1	RTN 787	776 TBH	UVG 37	WLJ 30	
AWN 111	602 BVF	627 CUW	991 EAU	780 EMO	42 OA	889 GOW	HNO 226	JKL 55	KOW 789	LCB 514	LJK 28	NJR 1	RU 8886	TCK 719	VAE 659	60 WM	
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22 AY	BW 333	98 CWS	EC 28	186 EGJ	ECO 368	889 GOW	HNO 226	JKL 55	KOW 789	LCB 514	LJK 28	NJR 1	RU 2165	TDJ 471	233 VBJ	WMG 582	
357 BAA	BWA 143	404 CXE	501 D	780 EMO	42 OA	889 GOW	HNO 226	JKL 55	KOW 789	LCB 514	LJK 28	NJR 1	RUO 350	TED 334	VCO 357	473 WAH	
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440 BAU	6538 BY	729 DAF	D 670	780 EMO	42 OA	889 GOW	HNO 226	JKL 55	KOW 789	LCB 514	LJK 28	NJR 1	7005 RW	9121 TF	VEW 751	99 WN	
BAW 888	35 BYS	804 DAE	ECO 368	780 EMO	42 OA	889 GOW	HNO 226	JKL 55	KOW 789	LCB 514	LJK 28	NJR 1	RVB 385	TFA 126	7731 VF	WNM 905	
BBM 449	BYN 849	729 DAF	EDT 778	780 EMO	42 OA	889 GOW	HNO 226	JKL 55	KOW 789	LCB 514	LJK 28	NJR 1	RYC 553	TFK 870	VFE 398	WOF 3	
FS 980	BZ 8024	DAV 697	7 EEN	780 EMO	42 OA	889 GOW	HNO 226	JKL 55	KOW 789	LCB 514	LJK 28	NJR 1	RTJ 8877	TJW 497	VFK 106	WP 9802	
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617 BBY	CAV 849	DAZ 99	780 EFR	780 EMO	42 OA	889 GOW	HNO 226	JKL 55	KOW 789	LCB 514	LJK 28	NJR 1	RTN 787	TLN 358	VLF 37	WPX 111	
321 BC	234 CBJ	70 DB	811 EFU	780 EMO	42 OA	889 GOW	HNO 226	JKL 55	KOW 789	LCB 514	LJK 28	NJR 1	RTV 111	TLN 123	VLK 1	98 WJ	
BCK 3R	334 CDD	DCP 29	779 EGF	780 EMO	42 OA	889 GOW	HNO 226	JKL 55	KOW 789	LCB 514	LJK 28	NJR 1	RU 2165	TLM 123	VLN 87	WSU 626	
261 BCR	92 CCE	883 DCG	11 EH	780 EMO	42 OA	889 GOW	HNO 226	JKL 55	KOW 789	LCB 514	LJK 28	NJR 1	RUO 350	TLT 843	VNM 1427	WTA 600	
373 BDT	484 CCH	DDO 140	22 EH	FJR 83	889 GOW	HNO 226	JKL 55	KOW 789	LCB 514	LJK 28	NJR 1	RV 6774	TPA 646	SBD 657	TLN 358	725 VMH	537 WTG
BEK 6C	CCO 899	84 DDE	780 EFR	780 EMO	42 OA	889 GOW	HNO 226	JKL 55	KOW 789	LCB 514	LJK 28

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SECRETS 58, 59
Fund managers step into the spotlight

WEEKEND MONEY

BATTLE 56, 57
Market for corporate bond Peps hots up

Indexation is being touted as the route for pensions but how advisable is it? **Patrick Collinson** finds out

The passive option

THE Government has plans to alter radically the arrangement of your personal finances. Its proposals could change the way you save for your pension and how much you set aside, significantly altering your disposable income. In the future, you may be compelled to invest 10 per cent of your earnings for your old age. Some experts believe that even this level of investment may be insufficient.

As part of its welfare review, the basic state pension is also under consideration. A pensions review will address our low saving for retirement and ways to minimise the cost of the basic pension. The answer could be encouraging the nation into low-cost indexed funds which invest only in big-name stocks. Traditionally, pension funds have held a diversified spread of investments. The repercussions could be considerable. We consider the impact on your pocket of such reforms, starting with indexed pensions.

For some, the answer to the British reluctance to provide for their old age is indexation — low-cost funds with no frills that track the performance of the big stock market indices, cutting out individual stock selection and investments such as property. In future millions may have their pensions index-invested if the Government decides in favour of indexing for stakeholder pensions, an idea it raised in the consultation document last year.

However, views differ on the advisability of this approach. Richard Branson is a fan, the Office of Fair Trading recommends it, and this week Direct Line unveils an index-only pension. But is passive indexation of your pension the right choice for you?

Indexation has been big business among company pensions for some time. Barclays Global Investors, the world's biggest index manager, says around 18 per cent of the £650 billion invested in UK company pension schemes is indexed, from almost nothing in 1984. In the US, the birthplace of indexation, more than $1 trillion is in index funds.

Indexation is one of the simplest, and cheapest, investment concepts. An index fund promises to match the movement, up and down, of a selected index such as the FTSE 100 or the FTSE All-share. Computers are used to buy and sell the shares that make up the index so that an *investor can cheaply emulate the* performance of the index. This "passive" approach to investment management compares with the "active" approach of selecting a basket of shares which a manager hopes will outperform the index.

The argument for indexation is compelling: better performance, wider investment diversification and lower charges. Since the Charlie's Angels era of the Seventies, the All-share index has risen from around 200 to more than 2,500. In 1997, when All Saints became the pin-up of the moment, the FTSE 100 jumped 24.69 per cent and the All-share was up 23.5 per cent. But figures from CAPS, the pension performance measurement company, reveal that the average return on the UK equity portion of British pension funds was 21.7 per cent.

Martin Campbell, Virgin spokesman, said: "Nine out of ten active managers underperform the index. You might be the lucky investor with the one in ten, but it's far more likely you are going to be the unlucky nine in ten. Why should you want to pay extra for a fund manager to second guess the market with figures like these?"

> **It's far more likely that you will be one of the unlucky nine in ten investors**

An index also gives an investor wide diversification. Adrian Webb, Direct Line spokesman, said: "In an actively managed fund, you are trying to pick winners, and you probably only have a limited number of shares in your fund. In our FTSE 100 tracking fund you get all the top 100 companies and your risk is reduced."

Virgin says it welcomes competition from Direct Line. Mr Campbell said: "Our index is the All-share not the FTSE 100. Your risk is spread across all 900 quoted companies. It means you have a spread of smaller companies, companies which earn most of their profits overseas and ones with emerging markets exposure. It's the only fund you need."

Lower charges and simplicity are another feature of index funds. Barclays Global says that, at an institutional level, index funds cost just a fifth of the management costs of an active fund. Direct Line charges a 2 per cent fee on each monthly contribution plus a 1 per cent annual charge for its new pension, whereas charges on actively managed personal pensions would typically exceed 5 per cent.

Indexing takes away the potentially confusing choice of with-profits fund, managed fund, and specialist unit trusts which face the average pension buyer. Both Virgin and Direct Line offer just the one index, plus a safety fund for people close to retirement who do not want the risk of being in equities just before buying their annuity.

Direct Line offers a cash fund and Virgin runs an "Income Protector" fund that invests in a mix of gilts and corporate bonds, and which, it believes, is a better way of avoiding risk before buying an annuity.

> **Do we really want 35 million people with all their pension money in equities?**

However, indexation does have many critics. Steven Cameron, Scottish Equitable pensions development manager, said: "A choice of just an index fund or cash is extremely narrow. Index funds are fine as far as they go. But they only include equities: they have no fixed interest or property investments. Unlike active managers, they can't choose when is a good time to move out of equities into more appropriate investments.

"It's wrong to think of index funds as safer than other funds. Indices can go down as much as any fund. They are certainly no safer than an actively managed fund."

There is also some debate over the performance figures. Kevin Coomber, Sedgwick Noble Lowndes investment consultant, says that a comparison of UK indexers versus the pure equity portion of UK pension funds does not always run in favour of the indexers. He says CAPS figures show that the median UK pension fund outperformed the index in 1992 and 1996, and all but matched it between 1993 and 1995.

He said: "There are several periods when indices outperform active managers, but several periods when they don't. I expect in future that the worst active fund managers will be forced out of business, and we will end up with a sample of active managers that can regularly add 1 per cent extra on performance above the index every year."

The historical evidence points to the dangers of holding all your money in an equity tracker, says Richard Urwin, Gartmore head of economic research. "Equities don't automatically go up in all circumstances. If on the day before the 1987 crash you put all your money in a money market account, it would have taken until 1995 for equities to outperform cash again. Do we really want 35 million people with all their pension money tied up in equities?"

FROM THE SEVENTIES TO THE NINETIES, THE FORTUNES OF THE INDEX

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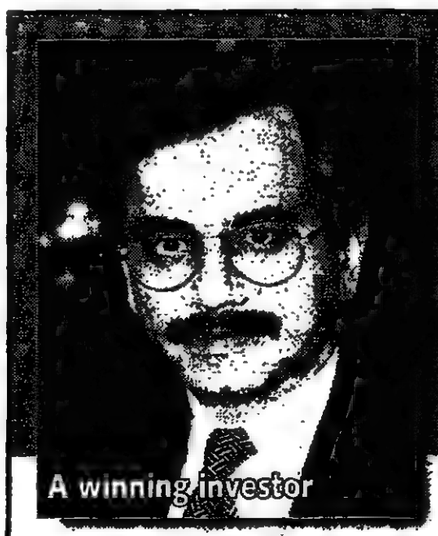
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Clash of views over cost of funding our old age

Caroline Merrell on proposed enforced saving for retirement

It now seems almost inevitable that people will be forced to save a considerable part of their income to pay for retirement. Compulsory contributions to fund a second-tier pension, on top of the basic pension that is paid for out of national insurance contributions, now seem almost certain. The question is, how much should people be made to save?

Longer lives, low interest rates and falling annuity rates mean that to ensure an adequate retirement, many believe that at least 10 per cent of earnings need to be put into a pension. For someone on average earnings, this represents £1,800 a year, or £150 a month.

Others believe that if the aim is to retire on the maximum allowed, which is two thirds of final salary, savings must be greater than 10 per cent.

As Tony Blair went on the road to preach the gospel in terms of the Government's plans for a total overhaul of the welfare state, ministers and advisers behind the scenes at the Department of Social Security were picking over responses that the Government has received to its pensions review, many of which endorsed compulsion.

At the moment, 70 per cent of total national insurance contributions go towards paying the basic pension, while 7 per cent pay for Serps. The value of the basic pension as a percentage of average earnings is to fall dramatically over the next two decades. The Government has also hinted that it intends to close Serps for new entrants at some point. State retirement benefits generated from NI contributions alone are not going to be enough to fund an adequate retirement.

The Association of British Insurers, the trade organisation representing the insurance industry, believes that compulsory contributions will have to be in the region of 10 per cent. However, others believe that contributions will have to be even higher.

In recent years, the problem of impoverishment among pensioners has been exacerbated by low interest rates. These mean that the income from annuities, the products that pay a private pension, is very low. This income can be eroded by inflation.

Lane Clark & Peacock, the firm of actuaries, claims that individuals need to save nearly a quarter of their salary towards a pension to have an adequate retirement. Bob Scott, a partner in the firm, said: "While the Government claims to be committed to encouraging personal investment in long-term pensions provision, the rhetoric is not matched by their policies, which are now actively discouraging individuals from saving adequate sums."

Research by the actuaries found that pension costs are substantially higher than they were a few years ago. The fact that people are living longer and that interest rates are lower means that the cost of providing an annuity to cover pensions is much higher than in the past.

Lane Clark says that someone earning £21,000 a year would hope to retire on half income and a lump sum of 1.5 times final earnings. A final pension fund of £240,000 would be needed to achieve this. Five years ago, the figure would have been £180,000 — a quarter less. The firm claims that a typical individual would have to save 24 per cent of salary each year to reach the £240,000 target. The proportion of salary that needs to be saved is more than the Inland Revenue allows on both company and personal pension schemes.

The amount that should be contributed is also linked to age. According to Legal & General, a man of 30 earning £18,500 who has paid full Serps contributions and basic pension contributions, would have to contribute £140 a month to a pension to retire on half final salary, equivalent to 9 per cent of earnings.

Those who start saving for a pension earlier still have to pay a considerable proportion of earnings into a policy to produce an adequate pension. For example, a man of 21, who may never benefit from Serps and who earns £8,000 a year, would have to put £54 a month into a pension to produce a scheme paying 50 per cent of final salary at retirement. This is equivalent to 8 per cent of earnings.

Tony Blair may make it compulsory to save for a rainy day

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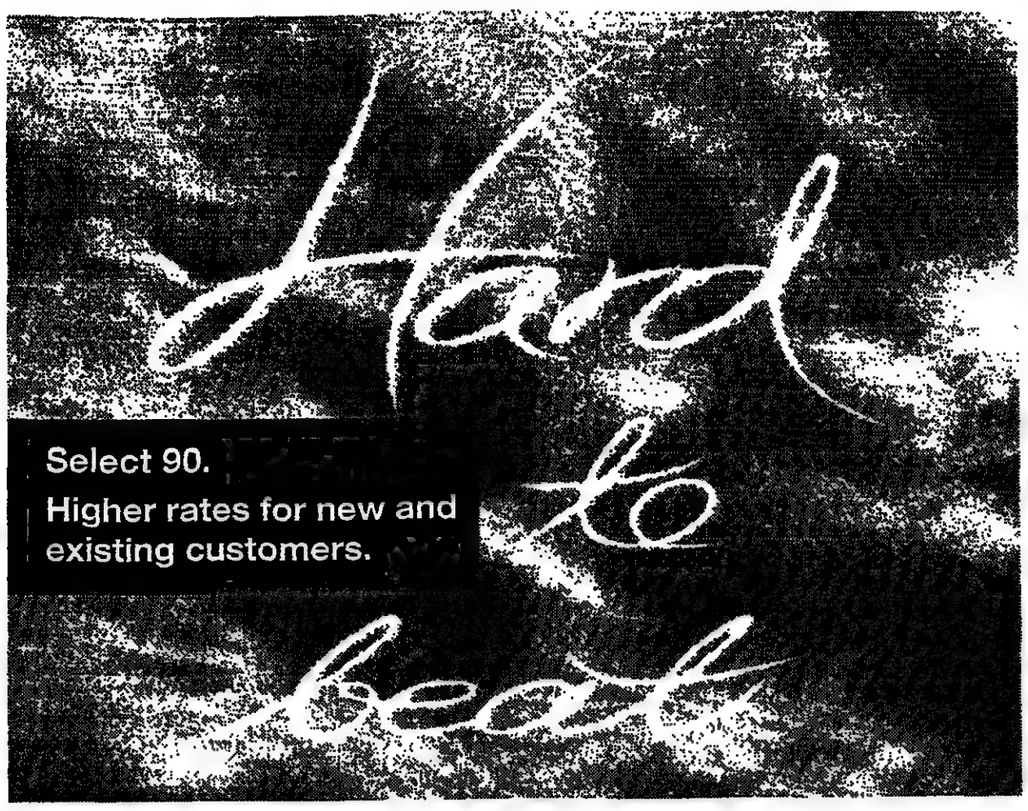

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Not so many happy returns

PERSONAL INVESTOR

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Are the good times over for stock market investors? A few years ago, some thoughtful analysts suggested that control of inflation would lead to lower investment returns. That was not just because inflation bumps up the numbers. It also puts a risk premium on loans and allows smart companies to turn uncertainty to shareholders' advantage.

So far, these warnings simply have not been borne out. Britain and America have traded inflation control for continuous economic expansion, at rates higher than economists reckon are normal. Investors have done well.

UK share prices have enjoyed double figures above inflation. Dividend payments have risen strongly in real terms. Long-term interest rates have come down, too. The yield on gilt-edged stocks with 15 years to run has been on a downtrend for almost a decade. Yields have halved from 12 per cent virtually to 6 per cent, interrupted only in 1994, when the world bond boom got out of hand and higher short-term interest rates brought a correction.

Falling long-term interest rates have helped to raise the ratings of shares beyond the rise in profits and dividends. The dividend yield on the FTSE All-share index is down to 3.2 per cent, equal to the lowest at any time since the mid-1980s, except for just before the 1987 crash. The yield to pensions funds, the top share buyers, is now only 2.6 per cent, thanks to Gordon Brown. Funds can no longer reclaim the tax prepaid on dividends. Pep-holders and charities have only one more year.

The average price you have to pay for £1 of company profits has risen to £20, up with the top ratings of the past 30 years. The market as a whole (rather than individual growth stocks) usually sells at high price to earnings ratios when profits are low but rebounding from recession. This time, ratings are high after six years of expansion.

On Wall Street, the same features appear in more extreme form. Bond yields are lower. Dividend yields average 1.6 per cent, compared with about 2.7 per cent at previous market peaks. After seven years of expansion, $1 of company earnings costs $26 (£15.40), against $22 before the 1987 crash.

These figures provide heavy ammunition for bears who expect markets to crash. That is always possible. There is another less exciting, but perhaps more depressing way of looking at it.

The scope for long-term interest rates to fall now looks limited, unless there is a deflationary recession. For that reason, the scope for share ratings to rise also looks limited. So prices are not likely to rise much more than profits and dividends, which are growing more slowly — less than 7 per cent this year on market forecasts. And if bond yields tumble further, it will surely be because investors think company profits are going into reverse.

If returns on gilt-edged and other bonds are limited to the current income yield, and the return on shares is limited to the reduced dividend yield plus the sluggish rate of growth of profits, then prospective returns do not look exciting. Tumbling bonuses on endowment policies reflect that fear. Some pension fund managers secretly doubt that they can match the returns expected by actuaries.

If those fears prove correct, private investors have an advantage. We are more flexible and do not have to buy the market. Some shares will still make fortunes, but it will be harder work.

In sickness and in health

Significant changes are taking place in the travel insurance market that could cut costs for many holidaymakers and reduce the number of medical-expenses claims that are rejected.

Under a code of practice, introduced by the Association of British Insurers, outlets that sell travel insurance are now advised to draw clients' attention to potential problem areas such as pre-existing medical conditions.

Travellers' Insurance Association (TIA), which underwrites policies for many travel agencies and tour operators, uses a system designed to ensure that customers do not overlook important health factors when booking a holiday.

At the time of being offered a policy underwritten by TIA, the customer will be asked whether they have been treated for heart or breathing problems, or been diagnosed as having a malignant disease. If the answer to both questions is "No", the customer is accepted for cover on standard terms. If the answer is "Yes", the customer will be medically screened using a computer and the premium set accordingly.

TIA's policies are only available through intermediaries, but a similar policy can be bought direct from Commercial Union.

Sometimes applicants for a policy will be asked to obtain a doctor's note, certifying fitness to travel. But, as Jeff Rush of TIA points out, fitness to travel may not be the same as fitness to arrive. A condition that would cause no problems in Tenerife might well spell trouble in the Himalayas. So TIA's computer screening takes into account the destination.

"Customers get the benefit of specialist advice on which countries are safe for the individual to visit," Mr Rush said. "We can make them aware of risks that might not have occurred to them."

Another insurer that offers policies over the phone is General Accident. Customers can expect to be asked whether they will be taking part in any hazardous sports, whether all persons to be insured are "fit and well to travel", and whether anyone suffers from any serious or recurrent illness.

Insurance bought through travel agents usually costs more than similar cover bought from insurers who sell direct to the public.

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IF YOU'RE GOING TO BUY A PENSION, MAKE SURE IT'S ONE OF THE BEST ON THE MARKET.

It's not always easy to work out which pension company you should choose, but *The Independent* recently used a system put forward in an Office of Fair Trading discussion document to review the market.

This simple rating system allows people to make a straight comparison between pension plans by giving each one a series of ratings on a scale of A+ to C-. The rating takes into account charges, transfer values and the proportion of people who decide not to continue with a chosen plan.

Company	Ratings early, mid and final stages taking into account charges, *transfer values and* persistency
Equitable Life	A+A+A+
Marks & Spencer	A+AA+
Scottish Widows	AAA
Virgin	AAA
Alliance & Leicester	AAA
Standard Life	AAB
Legal & General	AAA
Friends Provident	BAA
Clerical Medical	BBA
Commercial Union	ABB
National Mutual	BBA
Norwich Union	BBA
NPI	BBB
Scottish Mutual	BBA
AXA Equity & Law	BBA
General Accident	BBA
Scottish Life	BBA
Midland	BBC
Eagle Star	BBB
Scottish Amicable	BBC
Natwest	BBB
Sun Life	C-BA
J Rothschild	CCB
Scottish Equitable	CCB
Abbey National	BBB
Black Horse	CCB
Allied Dunbar	C-CA
TSB	CCC
Skandia	CCC-
Barclays	BCC
Guardian	CCC
Lincoln	C-C-C-

* 30 year plans with premiums of £200 per month, with projected growth of 9 per cent per annum
Note - the correlation between the estimated average plan return and ABC ratings is less close when plans only allow paid up values after a period, e.g. after a year with Abbey National and Barclays
Note - because of lack of data some substantial providers, eg. the Prudential, could not be included.

Source: The Independent, 13 December 1997

Their survey shows one company head and shoulders above the rest, with a perfect score.

WHY DOES THE EQUITABLE LIFE SCORE SO WELL?

The final value of your pension depends on two things:
First, how much of your money disappears in charges before it can be invested.
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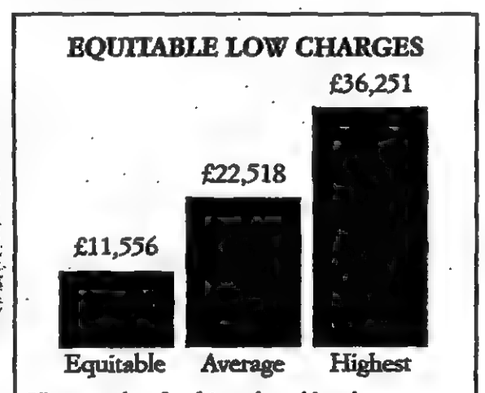
It's also why an annual *Planned Savings'* survey in October 1997 once again shows The Equitable Life as having the lowest ratio of expenses to premium income of all companies surveyed across the UK.

What is important is that we pass these savings on to our clients in the form of unusually low charges, so more of your money can be invested for the future.

The chart below shows the effect that different companies' charges will have on a £200 a month unit-linked pension plan over 20 years



How much a fund is reduced by charges over 20 years.

The above chart shows the effect of charges on the projected open market option funds as at 1 July 1997 for new style unit-linked personal pension plans for a man aged 45 retiring at age 65. Monthly contributions of £200. Assumed annual growth rate 9%.*

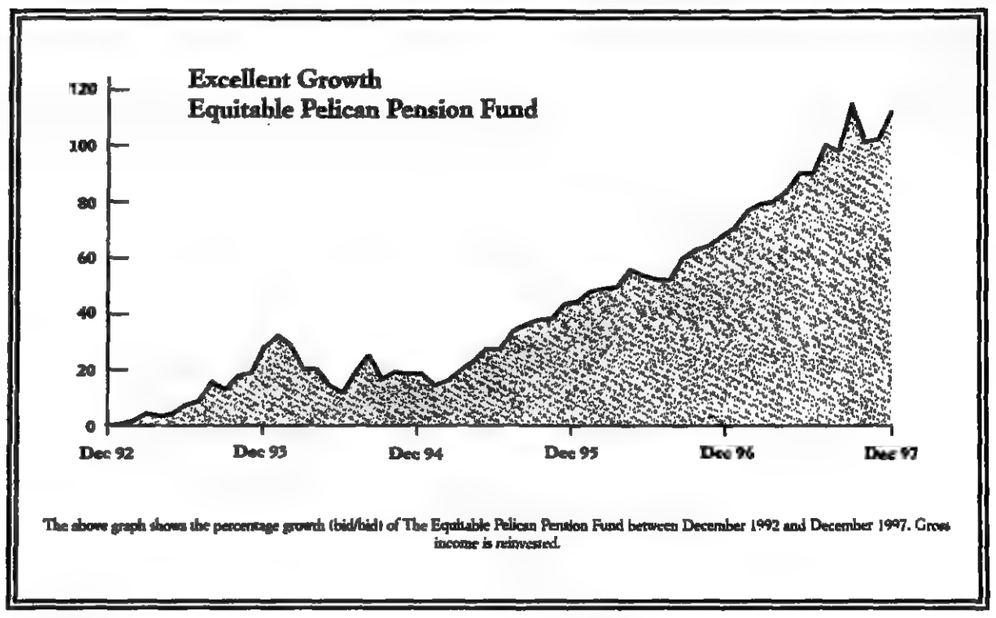
Because we charge almost half the industry average, the value of your fund could be increased by thousands of pounds. And that's before any difference in investment performance is taken into account.

STRONG AND CONSISTENT TRACK RECORD

If you had been investing £200 per month in our popular Pelican Pension Fund, a general UK equity fund, for the last five years, your plan would now be worth £17,441. That's well ahead of the £15,616 average for UK equity funds.*

Please note that past performance is no guarantee of future performance.

The value of units can fall as well as rise.



The above graph shows the percentage growth (bid/bid) of The Equitable Pelican Pension Fund between December 1992 and December 1997. Gross income is reinvested.

Contributions to the Society's pension products are invested in its pension business fund. Since July 1997, pension funds can no longer recover tax credits on the dividends from UK equities, but they continue to enjoy freedom from tax on capital gains and other income.

When choosing a pension provider, it makes sense to look for a consistently strong performer. After all, almost every pension company has some sort of success story to tell - perhaps one of their funds went through a brief purple patch at some stage. But how often have they been able to repeat that?

According to a recent survey in *Money Management*, 72% of our funds were above-average performers over 5 and 10 years. Our wide range of unit-linked funds also means that you can choose to link your investment to particular markets and sectors should you wish including, for example, UK Index Tracking, Gilt & Fixed Interest, High Income, Guaranteed Equity, Property, European, North American, Far Eastern, Ethical and Smaller Companies.

*Money Management, October 1997

MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY

Not everyone is in a position to contribute regularly. And many can't be sure when they will retire, so they want to be able to change their retirement date if necessary - without penalty.

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With an Equitable pension, you are free to increase or decrease your contributions at any time. And you can bring your retirement date forward, or delay it, as you choose. Unlike some companies, all without penalty.

IN SHORT

When it comes to pension planning, you can't start too soon. The longer you leave it, the worse off you could be when you retire. But although time is of the essence, it is not the whole story. You will also need to choose your pension provider very carefully.

It's not just a case of choosing a company with a consistent investment record. You need one whose charges will not cancel out much of the benefit of that investment growth. And because you can never predict your future circumstances, you need a pension plan that will give you all the flexibility you could need.

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Patrick Collinson assesses deals on offer for investors seeking

Battle royal at dull end

Corporate bond Peps are assumed to be the safe and dull end of the Pep market, investing in low-risk bonds to secure a steady flow of income.

But after a boom year in 1997, the battle for investors' money is hotting up. Accusations abound of dubious marketing and investment practices, especially over why there is so much discrepancy between the performance of different investment managers. But there is also a fierce debate over yields and charges, making corporate bond Peps one of the most aggressively contested parts of the investment market.

■ **PERFORMANCE**

When is a corporate bond Pep not a corporate bond Pep? When it contains almost no corporate bonds.

Strangely, this is possible under the Pep rules, which allow pseudo-equity instruments such as preference shares and convertibles to be included under the corporate bond Pep banner. This enables a fund manager to construct a portfolio that is more akin to an equity fund than a classic low-risk bond fund.

Even if a Pep is entirely bond invested, without any preference shares or convertibles, there can be some very interesting stocks lurking in the portfolio. A bond Pep can invest in any sterling-denominated bond, so, for example, it can own the bonds of Pemex, the Mexican oil company, which has issued bonds in sterling. The wide array of investments makes comparing one corporate bond Pep with another like comparing apples with pears.

Commercial Union, which runs one of the biggest and top-performing corporate bond Peps, has more than 45 per cent of its investments in preference shares. Aberdeen Prolific's fund is currently 64 per cent invested in convertibles. Perpetual, Standard Life and Guinness Flight, on the other hand, run more "pure" corporate bond funds, with the majority of investments in traditional corporate bonds plus a portion in very low risk gilts.

Paul Causer, Perpetual fund manager, said: "There's a big discrepancy in performance between the top and bottom funds, which you might not expect from the bond arena. The funds which have had a lot of convertibles and preferences have enjoyed over the last year an equity kicker to their performance."

Are convertible/preference-style corporate bond Peps higher risk? Ruth Clarke, Commercial Union product director, said: "Our fund has got an equity play, which is helpful, but in terms of risk there are 160 stocks in the fund to provide diversification."

One of the reasons for the wide variety of investment content in corporate bond Peps is that many of the funds, such as CU's fund, were launched before bonds were admitted into the Pep regime in 1995, and then shoehorned into the Pep format. Funds launched after the regime was established tend to be more purely invested in corporate bonds.

■ **YIELD**

The advertising war between the corporate bond Pep sellers focuses around the level of yield (or income) paid by the fund. Legal & General, for example, is promoting its Pep with a yield of 7.3 per cent, while another big player in the bond field, Guinness Flight Hambro, quotes a much lower yield of 5.69 per cent.

Part of the difference is explained by whether the investment manager is quoting the running yield or the redemption yield. Redemption yields, which show how much you will earn if you hold the fund until the bonds mature, tend to be 0.5 to 0.6 per cent lower than running yields, which are a snapshot of current yield.

Peter Ainsworth, Guinness Flight marketing manager, said: "The redemption yield is what matters, and L&G hardly mentions it. The running yield can move all over the place." L&G's redemption yield is 6.8 per cent, and is only mentioned in the advertising small print.

But Stephen Abbot, L&G Unit Trust Managers marketing director, robustly defends the use of running yields. He said: "The running yield shows the amount that will actually be paid out, while redemption yields show what you would get if you held the existing portfolio to maturity. But the portfolio is traded and will not be held until redemption. People are only interested in what they are going to get.

PETER TRIEVNOR

Reliability is key

GRAHAM WILLIAMS, a project manager with BP, does not have time to monitor his investments. In fact, his thoughts only turn to the subject a couple of times a year once he has built up a lump sum.

That is why he has chosen to place his money in a corporate bond Pep. Last year Mr Williams, above, invested £6,000 into a Legal & General corporate bond Pep and £3,945 on behalf of his wife. He was looking to build a balanced portfolio with low to medium risk.

Mr Williams, who is currently working irregular hours on a special project from his home near Guildford, Surrey, said: "I don't have the time to spend doing a weekly check and making market comparisons, so reliability means a lot and Legal & General has a proven record of performance over the years."

SUSAN EMMETT

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to enter world of corporate bond Peps

of the market

and giving equal prominence to redemption yields would be quite confusing."

The issue splits the Pep industry, with Autif, the unit trust trade association, admitting that no solution acceptable to all sides has yet been found. A spokeswoman said: "There is no agreement across the industry on which figure is appropriate to quote. It is an area where Autif may have to take a more 'regulatory' stance as the industry must not be seen to mislead customers."

■ CHARGES

Bonds are considered to be cheaper to manage than equities, and this should be reflected in the level of charges. Some companies have aggressively cut charges, with L&G charging only 0.5 per cent per annum and no initial charge.

M&G has no initial charge, but charges exit penalties if you cash in your investment before five years. Investors should also look out for charges that apply only to the underlying unit trust. A manager may charge extra for the Pep wrapper.

Another key area is whether charges are taken from capital or from income. If the annual charge is taken from capital, it has the effect of making the yield figure look a lot higher that it would otherwise be.

For example, Aberdeen Prolific's fund has a running yield of 8 per cent, but charges 1.25 per cent per year against the capital. If the charge was taken off income, the yield would be a much less flattering 6.75 per cent.

Peter Raistrick, Standard Life business development manager, said: "Our yield is 6.25 per cent, which is after the annual charge of 0.95 per cent. So the fund in total is earning a 7.2 per cent yield. Aberdeen Trust appears to have a much higher yield but you have to look at what they are doing with the capital."

Standard Life also believes that, as a huge life office, used to managing bonds for more than 100 years, it is the natural home for bond investors. Mr Raistrick said: "We hold £3.8 billion in corporate bonds. It's bigger than most unit trust companies' holding of anything."

But Perpetual's Mr Causer said: "Life companies have got a long history of managing debt, and I would expect them to make these claims, but the argument is not borne out by the facts. They simply do not do as well as the likes of M&G and us."

■ BEST BUYS

BESt Investment, which analyses the Pep market, compiles a list of the best buys in corporate bond Peps. To obtain a free copy, telephone 0171-321 0100.

Commission impossible

Three years of revealing to consumers the true costs of buying investments has failed to successfully complete the mission of cutting commission or policy charges. A report by the Personal Investment Authority (PIA) found that company salesmen and independent financial advisers still earn extremely high commission, greatly reducing the potential returns of life insurance and pension policies, and unit trust saving plans.

The new hard disclosure regime, as it was termed, was introduced at the beginning of 1995 despite enormous resistance from the life insurance industry. The latter claimed that if consumers knew exactly how much money was creamed off in charges and commission they would stop buying policies altogether. Consumer groups argued that revealing to consumers the actual costs of policies before they made a purchase would increase competition and bring down costs.

The PIA report reveals that in the three years since hard disclosure was introduced charges have fallen only a little and commission remains extremely high. Nearly two thirds of the premiums paid during the first year of a typical pensions policy are used to pay the commission of the independent financial advisers that offer the products. Company sales people earn even more from sales. Around 88 per cent of the first year's premiums is swallowed up by commission.

On endowment plans commission charges are still high. Around 88 per cent of the first year's premium is used to pay commission — higher than three years ago.

Independent advisers and company salesmen have been under continued attack over commission levels. But many claim that they rebate this commission to clients. However, the PIA report found that only 14 per cent of independent advisers and less than 1 per cent of company representatives were willing to accept reduced commission to enhance the returns to customers.

Management charges and other policy charges also eat in to potential returns. Charges on, for example, a ten-year savings product plan will cut potential returns from a hypothetical 7.5 per cent to between 4.2 and 6 per cent. Over a longer 25-year term, charges will have slightly less impact, cutting a 7.5 per cent yield to between 7.1 and 5.8 per cent. Personal pensions, which use hypothetical 9 per cent returns, show reduction in yield of between 0.8 and 1.8 per cent.

The impact of charges are likely to become even more significant over the next few years. Low inflation and low interest rates are generally perceived to reduce UK stock market returns and keep gilt yields low, which will hit the returns on the majority of life and pensions products.

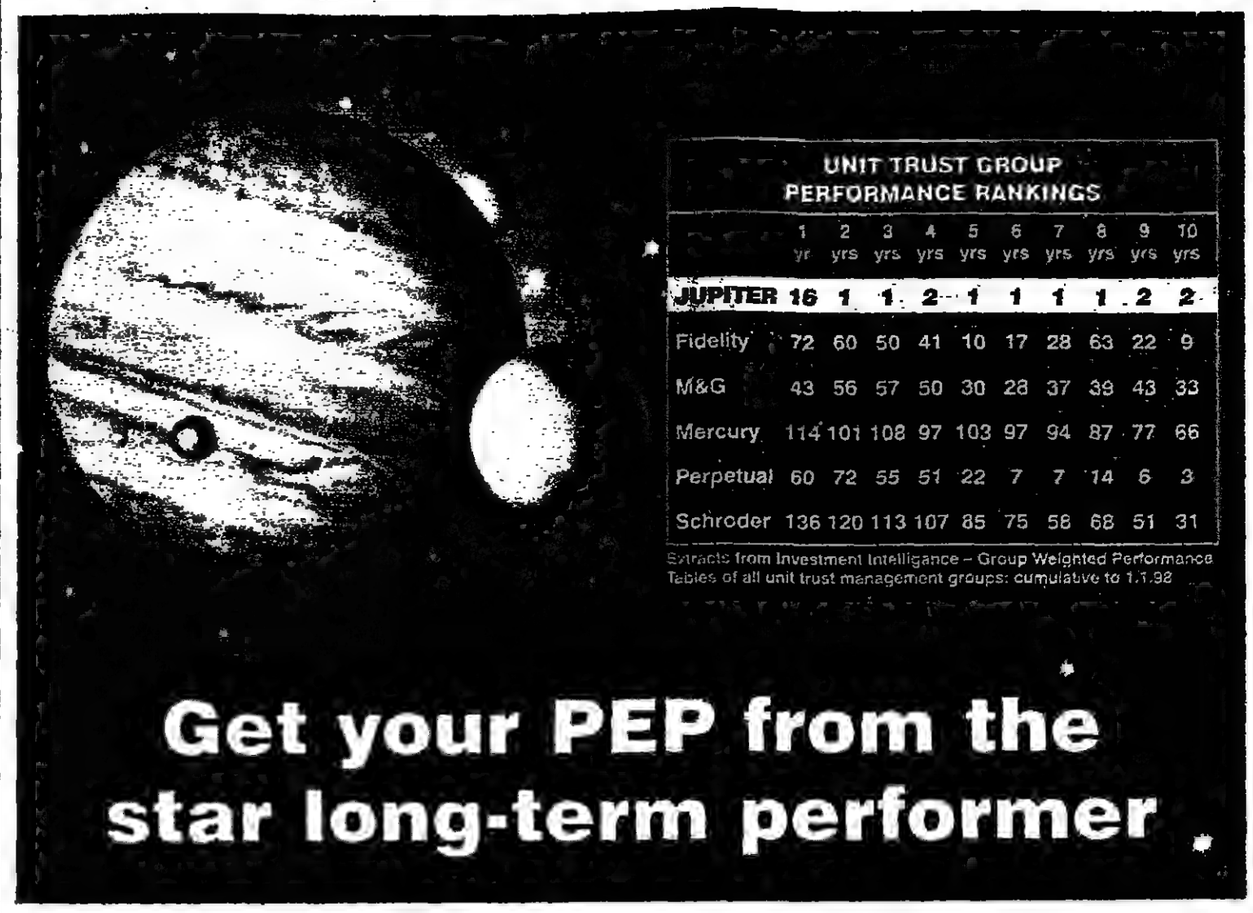
The companies that charge the most on endowments include London & Manchester, Clerical Medical, Britannia Life and United Friendly. The companies that charge the least include Equitable Life and Axa Equity & Law.

The most expensive pensions are marketed by Abbey Life, Albany Life, Royal Sun Alliance and Colonial — charges cut returns on these by nearly a quarter. Cheap pension companies include Equitable Life and Legal & General.

The PIA also analysed the charges levied by Pep managers. The most expensive lump-sum Pep was offered by Rothschild, while the cheapest was Virgin Direct's.

CAROLINE MERRELL

Even Tom Cruise would struggle to keep charges down



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The value of investments and any income from them can go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount invested. Current tax levels and reliefs will depend on your individual circumstances. From 6th April 1999 tax credits will not be reclaimable on PEPs. The Government published a consultative document in December 1997 on proposals for Individual Savings Accounts (ISA's) to be launched in April 1999. The terms and limits for converting an existing PEP into an ISA are being considered as part of the consultation. We do not offer advice as to the suitability of the investments you buy through us. If you have any doubt whether an investment is suitable for you, you should obtain expert advice.

Fund managers step into the spotlight as **Bruce**

Investment secrets of the leading players

Do the people who tell you how to invest your money put their money where their mouth is? Largely the answer is yes. A small survey by Weekend Money found that senior Pep managers in the City do keep much of their financial worth in unit trusts and Peps.

Even though they work close to the heartbeat of the market, most do not try to second guess its rises and falls. Instead, they follow their own standard advice of investing widely, regularly and for the long term.

Surprisingly, most had not invested much before they worked in the business. Instead, the heads of the money management business largely learnt about investing on the job. None of the managers held an MBA, and their backgrounds ranged from an Egyptologist to sports writer. They became interested in saving and investing as family responsibilities and mortgages arose. Also, they have all made mistakes and lost money through investing, though only one would own up to losing any money on an investment fund managed by his company.

Weekend Money asked five heads of leading firms, who together manage more than £22 billion, how they had invested in the past and where they were going to be putting their Pep money this year. All invested in their own company funds, even though they do not receive a discount on Pep investments and pay the same fees that you and I do.

The general consensus seems to be continue to invest in UK shares, but consider in smaller companies. Also, almost to a man, they had lost money investing in Japan, but continued to endure the slaughter.

Paul Manduca fancies investing in French property

■ **Roger Cornick, deputy chairman of Perpetual.** Mr Cornick was a theatrical angel and made a small but tidy profit on a small investment in *Evita*. He later turned down an investment in *Cats* because he didn't think it had "much potential". He does not follow the daily fluctuations of individual shares. He began investing in Peps and unit trusts when he began working in the business. At this point in his life the 53-year-old Cornick is not willing to gamble. "I firmly believe," he says, "you should have a spread of companies and countries, which is nothing more than just basic investment common sense."

Despite concerns about the Far East and the ageing UK bull market, he continues to invest in two Perpetual Peps, the UK Growth fund and the internationally oriented Perpetual Pep growth fund. He says the Perpetual Growth fund doesn't have that much in the Far East. As for personal investments, the best investment he has made has been in his own company, Perpetual. Its shares grew 1,472 per cent. His biggest mistake was investing in a film on the life of Mohammed Ali from which he "didn't see a penny".

■ **Paul Manduca, chief executive, Threadneedle Asset Management.** After 22 years in the City, Mr Manduca, 46, was brought into reorganise the old Allied Dunbar and Eagle Star investment funds into a cohesive unit, now called Threadneedle. He is one of the few chiefs who has paid his dues as a fund manager.

Because of his background and the recent market highs, he questioned whether now was a good time to invest.

Instead, he discussed the prospect of owning an income-generating house in the South of France, partly because prices have fallen substantially over the past few years. Interest rates are low and the franc is ten to the pound versus seven not so long ago.

Like others, he holds a wide spread of collective or pooled investments. Through his firm, Threadneedle, he owns global select growth funds, UK smaller company funds, UK growth funds and monthly income funds. But for his Pep money, he maintains a self-select Pep with Lloyds Bank. He says it was the cheapest provider in the late 1980s and it is important to watch the charges.

In his self-select Pep, he owns several of the "generalist global" investment trusts. Two years ago, he started "to invest in property investment trusts because most people weren't interested in them".

He believes that the "doom and gloom" in the Far East offers good buying opportunities in the year ahead, though he would not be in any hurry to invest. Like others, he has been investing in Japanese smaller company investment trusts.

■ **Richard Royds, managing director, Mercury Fund Managers.** Mr Royds, 40, managing director of the unit trust and Pep division of Mercury, says that in his younger days, he occasionally took flyers on stocks; investment performance varied, but his worst memory was the £5,000 he sunk into a speculative oil company, which today is worth a grand total of £50.

Before he came to the City 12 years ago from an advertising background, he thought he could do better than the investment professionals in the City. But he quickly realised it was nonsense to try to beat the investment professionals at their own game".

He holds a full complement of his company's unit trusts and Peps. He "sleeps at night" by investing regularly in the Mercury balanced portfolio. This is an all-purpose fund that invests in international shares and fixed-interest securities.

In the 1998-99 tax year he plans to invest in the Mercury income fund. He crows about one of his best investments, Mercury's gold and general fund, which increased four times in two years and he took

McNaught: art lover

Royds: "sleeps at night"

Chimes: rely on professionals

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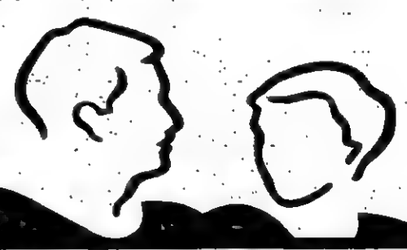

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*Correct as at 6/1/98, source Moneyfacts. Member of the Building Societies Association. Telephone calls may be monitored or recorded for security or training purposes. The interest rate is variable. Interest is calculated from the 4th working day following receipt of your cheque. Interest on the above example is paid annually (a monthly interest option is also available) and may be paid gross subject to certification as required by the Inland Revenue. First Class 120 is a deposit account and does not confer membership rights of the Society. Withdrawals may be made without notice subject to the loss of 120 days interest on the amount withdrawn or without penalty if 120 days notice is given. Minimum investment £10,000. Maximum investment £500,000. Joint Accounts £1 million. Birmingham Midshires Building Society, PO Box 81, Pendeford Business Park, Wobaston Road, Wolverhampton WV9 5HZ.

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McWilliams asks where they put their own money

MICHAEL LE POER TRENCH

Hit or miss? Roger Cornick passed up the chance to invest in *Cats* because he did not think it had much potential

the profit long before this year's gold debacle. He claims that for the rest of his portfolio he "never sells anything".

■ **Lewis McNaught, Director, Gartmore Investment Management.** Mr McNaught's primary distraction, besides lobbying the Government to tilt the proposed individual savings account (Isa) more to the investor's benefit, is 17th century furniture. Before entering the investment world 17 years ago, he developed a love for antiques working for the British Museum and Sotheby's. And though he regards furniture and art as "great investments", he cannot imagine selling.

Before working for Gartmore, he had never saved or invested with any regularity. Now Mr McNaught, 45, chairman of the Association of Unit Trusts and Investment Funds, has most of his investment funds in two Gartmore index trackers, the Gartmore UK index and Gartmore fledgling index investment trust. The first invests in companies in the FTSE All-share index, while the latter fund invests in smaller, start-ups. Mr McNaught believes that over the long run, the smaller companies should provide superior returns.

He calls his investment in the Japanese select investment trust "a dog". But, like most of the other managers interviewed, he has not sold his Japanese holdings because faith springs eternal.

Roger Cornick does not follow daily share price fluctuations

■ **Ian Chimes, managing director, Credit Suisse Asset Management Funds.** Mr Chimes, now managing director at Credit Suisse unit trusts, received shares for having worked at Abbey National. He decided to sell the shares on the first public day of trading, thereby passing up the manifold increase in the shares since then. He says one lesson "was to rely on investment professionals [in unit and investment trusts] to choose what to buy and when to sell".

His personal investments today centre around Credit Suisse funds. He owns several investment trusts from his days working at Hendersons and he also owns funds managed by Fidelity and Gartmore. This Pep year, he and his wife exchanged their demutualised building society shares and used their Pep allowance to invest in four Credit Suisse funds: the UK-oriented growth and smaller companies funds, the American-oriented transatlantic fund, and the European fund. He believes that the big companies have had their run and it is now the turn of smaller companies. He also regards the recent troubles in the Far East provide a golden opportunity.

Mr Chimes, 39, and his wife took a risk when they recently invested money for their baby daughter: £2,500 in the Invesco Hong Kong and Chinese fund and £2,500 in the Credit Suisse Orient fund because of the long-run growth potential.

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*Source: UK Funds Survey, November 1997. If you are not sure if these funds are suitable for you, please call 0800 829 100 and ask to speak to one of our trained advisers. The value of investments, and any income from them, can fall as well as rise and you may not get back the amount invested. Tax concessions are not guaranteed; their value will depend on your circumstances. Exchange rates may also affect performance. Past performance is not a guide to future returns. It has been announced that from 6th April 1999 it will not be possible to invest in a PEP. However, the Government plans to introduce Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs) and Save & Prosper aims to be at the forefront of ISA development. In the meantime you will not be disadvantaged by investing in a PEP. Save & Prosper is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and IMRO. We only advise on products and services offered by the Flemings and Save & Prosper Marketing Group.

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1936/012

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THE TIMES MONEY INFORMATION SERVICE

High street returns fire in savings war

The savings war has shaken up the high street banks as Midland launched an overhaul of all its savings products this week.

The redesign offers better rates than most traditional banks on four new accounts but falls short of beating the more aggressive rates paid by supermarkets on instant access savings.

The instant access account pays interest of up to 6 per cent on sums of more than £50,000 but only 4.25 per cent on an opening balance of £1.

The move follows Monday's launch of Safeway's direct savings account, which offers tiered rates of up to 7.4 per cent for deposits of £2,500 or more, and last week's debut of Halifax Direct, which pays up to 7.85 per cent on sums of £40,000 or more and 7.3 per cent for the minimum deposit of £10,000.

Sainsbury and Tesco both pay 6.5 per cent on all balances starting at £1.

The changes will give more than a quarter of a million Midland customers an immediate rate boost of up to 1.75 percentage points as the bank will automatically move existing customers to the new accounts.

■ Damage to gates, fences, hedges, lawns and patios is usually excluded from general household insurance policies. Premium Search, the broker, is offering protection to gardeners against the stormy weather with Garden Shield, its new policy.

Garden Shield will cover you for loss or damage caused by storm, flood, lightning, fire or explosion, falling masonry, trees, branches, theft, malicious acts, accidental damage caused by a third party and even wild animals. Call Premium Search on 0800 109876 for more information.

■ *The Good Non-Retirement Guide 1998* aims to strip away the mystique surrounding financial planning.

Written by Rosemary Brown, the book offers advice on budget planning, how to get the most from both state and private pension schemes, how to ensure you are not paying too much tax, discovering the full range of benefits to which you are entitled, plus the options of running your own business or finding new employment. Published by Kogan Page, the book is priced at £14.99.

LIZANNE ROSE

SAVERS' BEST BUYS

INSTANT ACCESS ACCOUNTS	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Nationwide BS 0500 302010	InvestDirect	Postal	£1	6.80	Yly
Safeway 0800 995995	Direct Savings	InstantB	£1,000	7.30	Yly
Safeway 0800 995995	Direct Savings	InstantB	£2,500	7.40	Yly
Alliance & Leic 0845 6088860	First Cls Inst	Postal	£10,000	7.50	Yly

NOTICE ACCOUNTS & BONDS	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Staffordshire BS 0800 216216	Direct 5 Day	5 day p	£10,000	7.80	Yly
Legal & General Bank 0500 111200	60 Direct	60 day p	£2,500	7.65	Yly
Northern Rock 0500 505000	Select 90	90 day p	£10,000	7.90	Yly
Investec Bank (UK) 0171 203 1650	Base Plus	1 year p	£2,001	8.00	OM

FIRST TESSAS (TAX FREE)	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Melton Mowbray BS 0800 731 7385		5 year	£1,000	7.90	Yly
Legal & General Bank 0500 111200		5 year	£3,000	7.90	Yly
Norwich & Peterborough 01733 372222		5 year	£100	7.85	Yly
Sun Banking Corp 01438 744505		5 year	£1,000	7.85	Yly

CREDIT CARDS BEST BUYS

CREDIT CARDS	Card type	Interest per month	APR%	Fee per annum
Capital One Bank 0800 669000	Visa	0.57%N	6.90%N	Nil
RBS Advanta 0800 077770	Visa	0.64%N	7.90%N	Nil
Co-operative Bank 0800 109000	Advantage Visa	0.69%NC	8.60%N	Nil

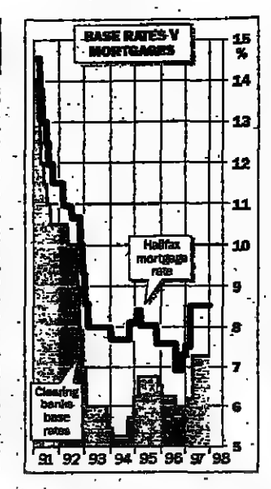
PERSONAL LOANS BEST BUYS

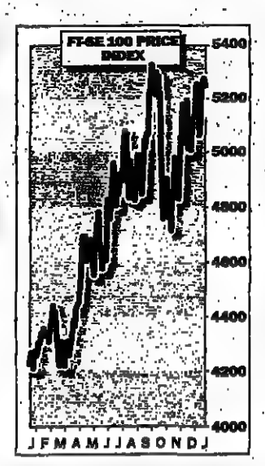
PERSONAL LOANS	APR	Monthly payment on £5,000 for 3yrs with insurance	no insurance
Northern Rock 0345 421421	9.90%H	£183.13	£168.11
Direct Line 0181 680 9966	12.80%A	£153.75	£166.38
RBS Direct 0800 121125	12.80%	£168.15	£166.38

NB. A = Minimum age 22 years, B = Operated by post or telephone, C = no interest free period, F = Fixed Rate, H = If insurance not arranged APR 12.7 per cent, N = Introductory rate for a limited period, OM = Interest paid on maturity, P = Operated by Post, T = Operated by Telephone.

* RATES SHOWN ARE GROSS AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE
PLEASE CHECK RATES BEFORE INVESTING

Source: MoneyFacts, the Monthly Guide to Investment & Mortgage Rates (01892 500 677)





NATIONAL SAVINGS

	Gross rate	At tax rates 20%	40%	Min/maximum investmnt £	Notice	Contact
Ordinary A/c[1]	2.00	1.60	1.20	10-10,000**		0645 645000
Investment A/c*[2]	4.75	3.80	2.85	1-499**[7]	1mth	0645 645000
Income Bond*[4]	7.00	5.60	4.20	2,000-25,000**	3mth	0645 645000
First Opt Bond[4]	6.75	5.40	4.05	1,000-20,000**		0645 645000
45th Issue Certs[3]	5.00			100-10,000	8day	0645 645000
Children's Bond†	6.25			25-1,000	1mth	0645 645000
Gen Ext Rate	3.51					0645 645000
Capital Bonds[4]	6.25	5.00	3.75	100-250,000	8day	0645 645000
12th Ind Linked†[5]	2.50			100-10,000	8day	0645 645000
Pensnrs Bond S4[4]	6.50	5.20	3.90	500-50,000[6]	60day	0645 645000

[1] first £70 (£140 jt) of int tax free, inst accs for up to £100 [2] Unlimited additional holds for reinvested proceeds †Tax free *Rates gross and vble [3]Guaranteed when held for 5 years [4]0.2% net bonus for £20,000+ [5]£100,000 jt in addition to S1, S2 and S3 holdings [6]Taxable but credited in full [7]£500-100,000 earn higher rates. **Tiered rates apply

PENSION ANNUITIES

All figures are the gross annual annuity (£100,000 purchase), guaranteed 5 years, paid monthly in advance

SINGLE LIFE (level ann)	Male:	Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
Sun Life	Level	£8,781	£9,910	£11,433
Equitable Lf	Level	£8,871	£9,883	£11,271
Canada Life	Level	£8,677	£9,781	£11,279
NPI	Level	£8,718	£9,749	£11,133
Legal & General	Level	£8,676	£9,714	£11,022
SINGLE LIFE	**Female:**	**Age 60**	**Age 65**	**Age 70**
Prudential	Level	£8,193	£8,911	£10,111
Equitable Lf	Level	£8,176	£8,909	£9,971
Generali	Level	£7,870	£8,809	£10,096
Canada Life	Level	£7,963	£8,799	£10,088
Sun Life	Level	£7,953	£8,770	£9,949
JOINT LIFE, 2/3 WIDOWS (level annuity)	**Male:**	**Age 60**	**Age 65**	**Age 70**
	Female:	**Age 55**	**Age 60**	**Age 65**
Equitable Lf	Level	£7,807	£8,384	£9,197
Prudential	Level	£7,622	£8,221	£8,985
Generali	Level	£7,488	£8,155	£9,084
Sun Life	Level	£7,513	£8,121	£8,937
Norwich Un	Level	£7,553	£8,111	£8,910

Source: Annuity Direct (0171 694 9000)

Statistics compiled by Lizanne Rose

GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS

ANNUAL INCOME

Rates as at January 22, 1998

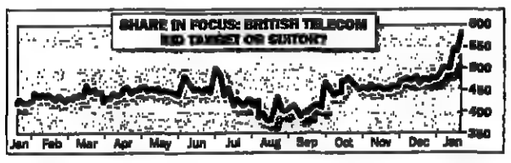
	Investment (£)	Company	Standard Rate (%)
1 Year			
	1,000	Hambro Assured	4.80
	5,000	GE Fin Assur	6.35
	10,000	GE Fin Assur	6.85
2 Years			
	1,000	Hambro Assured	5.35
	3,000	ITT Lon & Edin	6.10
	15,000	AIG Life	6.23
3 Years			
	1,000	Hambro Assured	5.35
	3,000	ITT London & Ed	6.20
4 Years			
	1,000	Hambro Assured	5.45
	3,000	ITT London & Ed	6.15
5 Years			
	1,000	Hambro Assured	5.35
	3,000	ITT London & Ed	6.05

Source: Chamberlain de Broë 0171-434 4222. Net rates. Income and capital guaranteed. Early surrender. Terms vary. Monthly income may be available.

PIBS

FIXED RATE	Gross coupon	Buying price	% Gross yield	Issue price	Minimum purchase amount
Birmingham Midshires	9.375%	127.00	7.380	100.17	1,000
Bradford & Bingley	11.625%	157.75	7.370	100.13	10,000
Bradford & Bingley	13.000%	176.00	7.390	100.20	10,000
Britannia	13.000%	175.00	7.430	100.42	1,000
Coventry	12.125%	163.00	7.440	100.75	1,000
First National	11.750%	159.00	7.390	100.25	10,000
Leeds & Holbeck	13.375%	185.00	7.230	100.23	1,000
Newcastle	10.750%	149.00	7.210	100.32	1,000
Newcastle	12.625%	174.75	7.220	100.45	1,000
Skipton	12.875%	179.50	7.170	100.48	1,000
PERPETUAL SUBORDINATED BONDS					
Chelt & Gloucester	11.750%	163.75	7.180	100.98	50,000
Halifax	8.750%	118.50	7.380	100.62	50,000
Halifax	12.000%	155.50	7.720	100.28	50,000
Halifax	13.630%	190.75	7.140	100.00	50,000
Bristol & West	13.380%	179.75	7.440	100.34	1,000
Northern Rock	12.625%	169.75	7.440	100.14	1,000

PIBS = Permanent interest-bearing shares. *Source:* NatWest Markets



LARGER LENDERS

Lender	Interest rate %	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Bank of Ireland 01189 510100	0.99	£20-145k	95	Fixed for 6 mths Further dscs
Northern Rock 0800 6050500	3.99	to £250k	75	Fix to 1.4.00 B&C
Alliance & Leic 0345 106108	4.49	£20-300k	75	Fixed to 1.3.00
Woolwich 0181 296 5831	4.99	£15-250k	95	Fixed to 1.4.00 B
Chelsea 0800 291291	5.39	£20-150k	80	Fixed to 1.2.00

N.B. Compulsory Products: B&C = Buildings & Contents insurance, B = Buildings insurance only.

LARGER LOANS

Lender	Interest rate %	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Bank of Ireland 0118 9510100	0.99	£20-145k	95	Fixed - 6 mths, more dscs apply
Scarborough 0990 133149	0.99	£15-100k	95	7.70% dec-6mth B&C more dscs apply
Leeds & Holbeck 0113 225 7777	1.45	to £180k	95	Fixed to 1.4.99 B&C
Mansfield 01246 202055	2.20	£125-175k	80	6% disc-6 mths, more dscs apply
Universal 0191 232 0973	2.99	£20-150k	90	6% discount to B&C 1.11.98

FIRST-TIME BUYERS

Lender	Interest rate %	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Bnk of Ireland 01189 510100	0.99	£20-145k	95	Fixed for 6 mths Further dsc apply
Mansfield 01246 202055	2.20	£25-100k	95	6% discount-6 mth Further dsc apply
Bristol & West 0800 119355	3.49	no max	95	Fixed to 1.1.99
Newbury 01635 43676	4.85	£30-100k	95	3% discount for 12 months
Wesleyan Loans 0121 200 3003	5.35	to £100k	95	3.25% discount for 12 months

Larger lenders, loans and first-time-buyers tables by Bay's Guides Ltd. (01753 880482)

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UNIT-LINKED INSURANCE INVESTMENTS

	Bid	Offer	Wkly +/-	Yld %
AEGON LIFE ASSURANCE Edinburgh Park, Edinburgh, EH12 9SE 0131 339 9191				
Balanced	576.10	609.70	+ 3.00	...
UK Equity	812.60	860.30	+ 0.90	...
Property	455.40	482.00	+ 0.60	...
Fixed Interest	374.30	396.40	- 1.20	...
Money	283.60	300.20	+ 0.30	...
International	446.30	472.30	+ 0.80	...
ABBEY LIFE Hollinbourne Road, Bournemouth BH8 8AL 01202 292373				
Consolidated S4	220.10	231.70	+ 0.97	...
Ethical S4	189.00	199.20	+ 1.30	...
International S4	218.60	230.20	+ 1.10	...
Protected Gth S4	131.80	138.80	+ 0.20	...
Asian Pacific	131.03	137.90	+ 0.10	...
European S4	270.50	284.90	+ 4.40	...
Prop Fd Ser 4	412.40	434.00	+ 0.50	...
Equity Ser 4	319.30	336.20	+ 0.60	...
Man Ser 4	369.00	410.00	+ 2.00	...
Cons Ser 4	371.80	391.40	+ 0.40	...
Money Ser 4	371.30	391.00	+ 0.30	...
Fixed Int Ser 4	492.50	476.20	+ 0.70	...
American Ser 4	833.70	877.60	+ 2.10	...
High Inc Ser 4	1031.30	1054.30	+ 1.60	...
Indexed Inv Ser 4	259.70	273.40	- 0.20	...
Japan Ser 4	242.60	255.40	+ 8.40	...
Provident Hill Samuel Life Assurance Ltd				
Security Fund	824.30	872.70	-10.80	...
British Fund	865.60	916.30	+ 2.90	...
International	705.20	746.30	+ 2.40	...
Dollar Fund	865.30	704.10	+ 2.40	...
Capital Fund	673.81	712.40	+ 3.00	...
Income Fund	1077.90	1141.40	+ 0.14	...
Property Series A	586.20	620.40	...	4.71
Property Units	979.60	1029.60	...	...
Financial Fund	1095.30	1095.70	+ 9.10	...
Managed Ser A	747.00	790.50	+ 2.60	...
Managed Units	1552.20	1623.40	+ 4.90	...
High Yield Fund	973.60	1030.00	+ 2.10	...
Money Series A	328.70	347.90	+ 0.40	...
Money Units	640.80	664.00	+ 0.40	...
Equity Fund	860.10	910.20	+ 4.00	...
Fixed Interest	461.00	509.00	+ 2.10	...
Indexed Ser	224.80	237.90	+ 0.00	...
European Fund	1100.30	1164.40	+21.60	...
Natural Res	244.10	258.40	+ 1.80	...
Far East Fund	437.50	463.00	+ 4.40	...
Smaller Cos	700.70	741.50	- 1.31	...
Special Sits	750.60	794.30	+ 9.70	...
Non Currency	292.10	309.20	+ 0.60	...
Japanese Tech	237.90	251.80	+ 1.50	...
US Smaller Cos	515.20	545.20	- 0.20	...
Formerly Target Life Assurance Cos. Ltd				
Deposit	267.20	269.00	+ 0.20	...
Financial Ser 1	83.90	88.40	+ 1.50	...
Fixed Interest	408.40	430.00	+ 0.30	...
Gold	63.20	66.60	+ 0.30	...
Managed	420.60	443.00	+ 2.00	...
Mngd Growth	262.40	276.30	+ 1.10	...
Property	397.10	418.00	...	...
Residential Prop	125.20	131.90	...	...
TSB American	365.30	403.40	- 1.10	...
TSB Brit Growth	1338.60	1409.10	+ 4.70	...
TSB European	407.90	429.40	+ 7.80	...
TSB Income	627.90	661.02	+ 1.20	...
TSB Intl	924.40	966.80	+ 1.90	...
TSB Pacific	306.60	320.50	+ 0.20	...
For Albany Life see Canada Life				
ALLIED DUNBAR ASSURANCE Swindon SN1 1EL 01793 514514				
Fed Int Dep Acc	424.00	446.40	+ 0.40	...
Equity Acc	1953.70	2056.00	+11.20	...
Property Acc	752.90	792.60	- 0.90	...
Far East Acc	231.20	243.40	+ 2.10	...
Managed Capital	676.40	714.20	+ 2.80	...
-do- Acc	1486.20	1566.00	+ 6.40	...
Overseas Acc	1432.30	1507.70	+ 9.50	...
Gilt Edged Acc	635.00	668.30	...	...
Amer Equity Acc	1357.50	1429.00	- 1.80	...
Amer Man Acc	565.70	598.50	+ 1.70	...
Amer Prop Acc	132.80	139.90	+ 1.80	...
Distribution Bonds	25.91	9.00	...	...
AXA EQUITY & LAW LIFE ASSURANCE Amersham Road, High Wycombe, Bucks 01494 463463				
Reverse Ser 6	190.40	200.50	+ 0.40	...
Balced Ser 6	975.20	1026.60	+ 1.30	...
Opportunity Ser 6	224.50	236.40	+ 0.40	...
Distribution Ser 6	115.50	121.60	+ 0.25	6.13
UK Equities Serv	1914.30	1984.10	+ 1.60	...
Higher Inc Ser 6	1626.60	1712.30	+ 1.20	...
North Amer Ser 6	677.40	713.10	- 1.80	...
Far East Ser 6	426.20	448.70	+ 1.10	...
Europe Ser 6	590.00	622.10	+ 0.90	...
Intnl Ser 6	704.70	741.90	+ 3.50	...
Property Ser 6	865.20	862.40	+ 2.00	...
Fixed Int Ser 6	543.80	572.50	+ 1.00	...
Ind-Linkd Sec S6	223.80	235.60	...	...
Gtrtd Dep Ser 6	338.40	356.30	+ 0.40	...
BARCLAYS LIFE 252 Romford Road, London E7 9TB 0181 534 5644				
Equity Acc	1306.40	1375.20	+ 5.20	...
-do- Initial	774.90	815.30	+ 3.10	...
Gilt Edged Acc	509.00	534.00	+ 1.90	...
-do- Initial	303.80	319.80	+ 0.70	...
International Acc	466.90	494.70	+ 4.50	...
-do- Initial	279.30	294.00	+ 2.70	...
Managed Acc	717.50	755.30	+ 4.10	...
-do- Initial	427.90	450.40	+ 2.40	...
Money Acc	330.00	347.40	+ 1.20	...
Property Acc	353.40	372.00	+ 0.30	...
-do- Initial	211.10	222.30	...	...
American Acc	478.50	503.70	- 1.10	...
Far East Growth	149.60	157.50	- 1.30	...
Financial Acc	597.00	628.50	+ 1.70	...
500 Accum	480.00	500.50	+ 1.30	...
Japan Acc	192.60	203.00	+ 7.60	...
Income Acc	768.20	809.50	+ 0.30	...
Special Sits Acc	405.00	426.40	+ 2.70	...
Unit Tech Acc	200.30	210.90	+ 1.70	...
BLACK HORSE LIFE Mountbatten House, Chatham, Kent ME4 4JF 01634 834000				
The Managed Fd	1096.44	1094.44	+12.38	...
Income Fund	1122.37	1186.71	+12.18	...
Extra Income	1020.46	1077.33	+ 9.76	...
Worldwide Gth	617.91	650.44	+12.02	...
Balanced Fund	990.80	1042.05	+14.99	...
Intnl Gth Bond	1110.34	1168.78	+ 7.09	...
N Amer & Genl	575.40	605.69	+ 6.88	...
Pacific Basin	349.89	364.84	+ 5.21	...
German Growth	310.10	326.43	+ 5.69	...
Japan Growth	136.15	143.32	+ 7.79	...
The UK Gth Fd	320.62	337.50	+ 4.70	...
Genl Euro Gth	196.59	206.73	+ 3.70	...
Property Fund	452.74	476.57	+ 0.48	...
Fixed Interest	448.06	447.46	+ 0.04	...
Cash Fund	320.28	337.14	+ 0.30	...
Managed Uts	648.03	682.14	+ 7.52	...
Sth Amer Secn	370.32	389.83	+ 1.40	...
BRITANNIA 50 Bothwell St, Glasgow G2 6HR 0141 248 2000				
Measured Perf	226.20	239.40	- 0.60	...
Performance Plus	288.30	262.70	+ 0.50	...
With Profit Perf	301.00	312.60	+ 0.30	...
Lib Opportunity	307.30	325.10	+ 0.10	...
Euro Opportunity	319.00	337.40	+ 4.30	...
North Amer Opp	294.30	311.40	+ 1.00	...
Far East Opp	164.61	168.91	+ 1.10	...
Gwth Prop Ser 1	180.90	190.50	...	...
Gth Prop Ser 2	218.30	230.80	+ 0.10	...
Fixed Int	262.80	278.00	+ 0.10	...
Cash	179.10	189.60	+ 0.20	5.49
Overseas	286.30	302.90	+ 0.60	...
Removals Ltd				
Managed Fund	473.60	498.90	+ 1.30	...
UK Equity	929.60	978.60	+ 0.30	...
Property	301.10	317.00	+ 0.20	...
Money Market	361.10	380.10	+ 0.30	...
Fixed Interest	381.80	401.90	+ 0.20	...
Japan	262.40	276.30	+ 7.30	...
North America	261.90	275.70	+ 0.90	...
International	442.30	465.50	+ 0.90	...
European	407.90	429.40	+ 5.50	...
Far East	116.20	124.50	+ 0.60	...
CANADA LIFE 24 High Street, Potters Bar, Herts EN6 5BA 01707 51122				
Managed	446.30	469.80	+ 4.60	...
Property	303.70	319.70	+ 0.10	...
Cash & Fxd Int	303.50	319.50	+ 0.30	...
Equity	567.30	597.20	+ 5.40	...
Cash	244.00	255.20	+ 0.20	...
Cliffe Euro Mgd	527.00	554.90	+ 9.50	...
Cliffe Intl Fd	359.00	377.90	+ 1.20	...
Managed Fund	952.90	1002.00	+ 9.80	...
Property Fund	628.20	661.30	+ 8.40	...
Equity Fund	1400.10	1473.80	+14.90	...
High Yield Fund	793.00	834.20	+ 1.50	...
Deposit Fund	378.30	394.00	+ 0.40	...
Investment Fd	919.31	968.23	+ 2.70	...
International	571.20	601.30	+11.40	...
Formerly Albany Life				
UK Equity	2254.20	2372.80	+ 8.70	...
Merc European	511.80	612.40	+ 8.60	...
Merc Fed Int	648.90	672.40	+ 0.60	...
Gtd Money	777.80	397.80	+ 0.30	...
Mercury Intl Mgd	807.00	851.50	+ 5.70	...
Merc Int Fed Int	391.00	403.10	+ 1.60	...
Mercury Japan	214.60	225.90	+ 5.40	...
Merc Sth Amer	509.50	535.20	...	...
UK Property	420.10	447.40	+ 0.50	...
Merc Multip Inv	1358.20	1429.70	+ 0.60	...
CITY OF WESTMINSTER ASSURANCE Sentry House, 500 Avebury Blvd, Milton Keynes MK9 2NU 01908 606301				
Property Fund	211.40	222.60	...	...
Managed Fund	875.30	921.40	+ 0.20	...
Equity Fund	554.90	584.20	+ 3.20	...
CLERICAL MEDICAL/FIDELITY INVESTMENTS Narrow Plain, Bristol BS2 0JH. 0117 9298566				
Assurance Funds				
Sterling Mixed	360.10	379.00	+ 0.40	...
Equity	210.20	221.30	+ 1.20	...
Emerald	176.70	186.10	+ 0.10	...
Equity	481.50	517.40	+ 1.20	...
Property	203.90	214.70	+ 0.50	...
Gilt & Fixed Int	263.80	277.70	+ 0.20	...
Interest Sens	300.70	317.00	+ 0.30	...
Cash	211.40	222.60	+ 0.20	...
Sth American	380.30	404.40	+ 2.00	...
Far East	226.50	238.50	+ 4.70	...
International	259.90	262.00	+ 1.80	...
Special Sits	535.30	563.40	+ 0.40	...
Intl Income	464.70	486.10	+ 1.10	...
European	519.20	546.60	+ 6.90	...
Japanese	95.91	101.00	- 1.50	...
SE Asia	275.40	290.00	- 3.90	...
With Profits Reg	196.70	210.30	+ 0.30	...
-do- Spec	199.70	210.30	+ 0.30	...
Flexible Retirement Plan - Funds				
Mixed	469.10	489.60	- 2.00	...
Equity	619.20	668.70	+ 2.40	...
Property	247.50	260.60	+ 0.70	...
Gilt & Fixed Int	340.90	367.90	+ 0.40	...
Index Linked	223.60	236.40	- 0.50	...
Cash	294.30	309.80	+ 0.20	...
Sth American	473.90	498.90	+ 2.60	...
Far East Acc	235.10	247.50	+ 2.20	...
International Acc	355.40	374.20	- 2.20	...
Special Sits	920.20	951.80	+ 1.00	...
European Flex	746.70	786.20	+ 9.50	...
COLONIAL MUTUAL GROUP Colonial Mutual House, Chatham Maritime, Kent ME4 4YY. 01634 890 000				
Unitar Acc†	269.26	...	...	...
-do- Pacemaker†	425.35	...	...	...
-do- Cash	227.51	239.48	+ 0.20	...
-do- Equity	774.27	815.02	- 0.21	...
-do- Fxd Int	457.52	481.58	- 0.15	...
-do- Managed	544.81	573.56	+ 0.22	...
-do- Property	437.08	460.08	+ 3.34	...
(Fund) Cash Cap	232.16	251.76	+ 0.13	...
-do- Cash Inv	334.73	378.66	+ 0.67	...
-do- Equity Cap	2015.19	2121.26	+ 2.30	...
-do- Equity Inv	3292.73	3466.08	+ 5.94	...
-do- Fixed Cap	493.10	518.01	+ 0.45	...
-do- Fixed Inv	804.08	846.41	+ 0.16	...
-do- Index Cap	233.83	246.13	+ 0.44	...
-do- Index Inv	392.05	412.17	+ 0.43	...
-do- Mngd Cap	797.28	838.72	+ 0.40	...
-do- Mngd Inv	1296.38	1364.06	+ 0.26	...
COMMERCIAL UNION St Helen's, 1 Undershaft, EC3 0171 283 7500				
Vir Ann Acc (S)	1171.34	...	+34.59	...
Vir Ann (S)	126.96	...	+ 2.94	...
Prime Managed	546.07	574.80	+ 2.10	...
Prime UK Equity	749.60	789.10	+ 1.60	...
Prime Int Equity	311.10	336.10	+ 2.60	...
Prime Property	279.90	294.70	+ 0.90	...
Prime Fixed Int	287.90	303.10	+ 0.40	...
Prime Index-Lnk	206.49	217.39	+ 0.20	...
Prime Cash	232.60	244.90	+ 0.20	...
CONFEDERATION LIFE Lytton Way, Stevenage, Herts SG1 2NN 01438 744940				
Managed Fund	1469.00	1546.30	+ 2.20	...
Equity U	2377.60	2460.60	+13.10	...
EAGLE STAR LIFE ASSURANCE Bridgend Drive, Cardiff, CF3 7LQ. 01242 221351				
Life Funds				
UK With Pfts (Mkt)	119.70	...	+ 0.20	...
Secure (2)	113.00	...	+ 0.10	...
Managed (3)	131.00	...	+ 0.60	...
Equity Mngd (3)	129.60	...	+ 0.80	...
Adventurous (3)	117.60	...	+ 1.40	...
Bristol & West (3)	115.85	...	+ 0.20	...
Equity Mngd (6)	315.30	331.70	+ 1.40	...
Managed (5)	315.70	332.40	+ 1.50	...
Adventurous (6)	342.50	355.30	+ 2.60	...
Managed (2)	214.60	225.90	+ 1.00	...
Equity Fixed Uns	417.10	432.30	+ 2.30	0.01
Pension Funds				
Unit With Pfts (S)	120.50	...	+ 0.30	...
Secure (2)	114.30	...	+ 0.10	...
Managed (2)	131.20	...	+ 0.70	...
Equity Mngd (2)	132.10	...	+ 0.90	...
Adventurous (2)	116.80	...	+ 1.60	...
Bristol & West (2)	116.60	...	+ 0.20	...
FRIENDS' PROVIDENT Castle Street, Salisbury, Wilts SP1 3SH 01722 413366				
Managed	426.20	448.70	+ 1.60	...
UK Equity	815.40	858.75	+ 1.30	...
Newcastle	508.90	535.70	+ 1.20	...
Overseas Equity	378.40	398.40	+ 2.50	...
North American	241.20	253.90	- 0.90	...
Pacific Basin	120.00	126.40	+ 1.50	...
European	386.70	407.10	+ 6.60	...
Property	200.90	211.60	+ 0.40	...
Fixed Interest	306.10	322.30	- 0.10	...
Index Linked	225.30	216.20	+ 0.30	...
Cash	227.80	239.80	+ 0.30	...
FP Life Assurance ex NM				
Fixed Interest	679.30	715.00	+ 0.30	...
Managed	984.70	1015.40	+ 4.70	...
Deposit	390.10	410.60	+ 0.00	...
Property	584.20	614.90	+ 0.50	...
American	675.70	711.20	+ 2.80	...
Australian	652.30	686.60	- 6.90	...
European	936.50	985.80	+18.00	...
Income Acc	1134.70	1196.40	+11.50	...
-do- Dist	807.40	849.30	+ 7.00	4.12
International	403.80	425.00	+ 3.00	...
Japan Smaller	268.30	282.40	+12.60	...
Singapore & Mal	242.70	255.40	+ 1.60	...
Tokyo Fund	555.30	584.50	+ 9.00	...
UK Equity	862.90	908.30	+ 3.10	...
CCM Vanguard Mg	1025.40	1079.30	+ 6.50	...
GT GLOBAL FUND MGMT LTD Allese Gate, 14th Flr, 125 London Wall, Lond EC2Y

Savings account without peer

After hearing about the stratospheric rates the Halifax is paying for its new Direct savings account, Lord Coleraine thought he had found a happy home for his money until he was cruelly rejected by the bank's computer (Susan Emmett writes).

The savvy peer, left, had set his heart on the Birmingham Midshires six-month savings account. But when he heard that the new Halifax telephone account would be paying tiered rates of up to 7.85 per cent on balances of £40,000 or more, Lord Coleraine went to open an account there.

The 66-year-old legal consultant had hoped to take advantage of the highest rate and would have been one of the first to deposit large sums. But because neither he nor other residents in his block of flats were on the copy of the electoral roll kept by the Halifax computer, the bank refused to take his money. Stunned, Lord Coleraine asked whether there was any way in which computer error could be circumvented and put right. He had, after all, lived in the same place for 22 years and regularly completed the electoral registration form each autumn. But the computer refused to comply.

Lord Coleraine said: "It's crazy. It might well affect other people more than me. I just thought 'how stupid' and moved on."

A spokeswoman for the Halifax said: "There are certain checks we have to do to comply with the money laundering regulations such as checking names and addresses."

Lord Coleraine has since decided to invest his money with Abbey National, which is paying him a rate of 7.8 per cent.

WEEKEND MONEY LETTERS

Self-assessment resources are mis-directed

From Mr Peter Hillman

Sir, My aunt died on November 3, 1996, and as her representative I wrote to the Inland Revenue informing them. After a normal exchange of correspondence, her tax affairs for the year 1996-97 were finalised, or so I thought, on February 14, 1997, when I received on behalf of her estate a rebate of £446.12.

It was with some surprise, therefore, that I have just received a self-assessment final reminder for 1996-97 in respect of her affairs. On contacting her tax office I was told, after much expensive hanging on while her file was located, that the computer was often sending out forms to deceased people and I should ignore it.

I expect the next notice to be a penalty, but I cannot help thinking that all the resources used recently in advertising the fact that so many people have not returned their self-assessment forms might be better employed putting their own house in order.

Yours faithfully,
PETER HILLMAN,
87 Primrose Copse,
Horsham,
West Sussex.

Give Service widows fair share

From Major-General P. R. F. Bonnet

Sir, Major Foulis set out to provide "clarifcation and balance" on Service widows' pensions (Half-rate Service widows' pensions, January 10), but unfortunately he got the campaigners' goals wrong.

Major Foulis points out that those serving in the Armed Forces at the time the rules of the Armed Forces Pensions Scheme were changed were given the opportunity to buy-in their previous service to secure, on their death, half-rate pensions for their widows. He and many officers were sensible enough to take advantage of this offer and obtained improved pensions for their widows at a preferential rate. Those who did not do so must accept the consequences.

The campaign for half-rate pensions is directed at helping the widows of Servicemen of all ranks who completed their military service before the rules were changed in 1973 and who were not given the opportunity to buy-in half-rate pensions. Their widows receive only a one-third rate pension.

These elderly ladies are mainly those who supported their husbands through the Second World War — indeed, many themselves served in the Forces during the war — and the nation is indebted to them. They now live on one third of what were small pensions anyway, and do so in the same increasingly expensive world as those for whom a half-rate pension has been the norm for a quarter of a century. I feel sure Major Foulis and the general public will see the efforts to improve the lot of these ladies as fair and honourable.

Yours faithfully,
P BONNET,
Officers' Pensions Society,
68 South Lambeth Road, SW8.

Manifest illogicality

From Mr Neil Inkley

Sir, I was captivated to read your correspondents commenting upon the inconsistency between government rhetoric and the provisions apparently being made for Isas. This inconsistency is a feature of this Government.

Pensions, health and savings are only the most obvious examples. I wait with near certainty that in the week when the review body reports, allowing the aged in care to retain more of their savings, death duties will be increased to consume the majority of any retentions! They could argue that the manifesto never mentioned logic.

Yours faithfully,
NEIL INKLEY,
6 Knot Lane,
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Preston, Lancashire.

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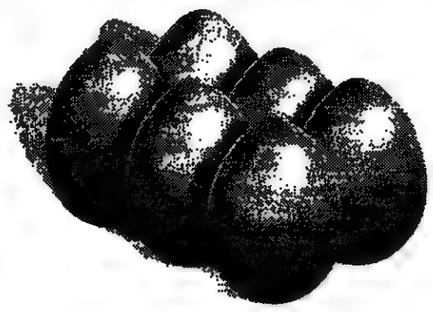

GRADE 1 INVESTMENT TRUSTS

This week's Investors Chronicle includes our six Investment Trust Tips for 1998. We tell you which funds we think will be the best investments in the year ahead. The six trusts, which aim to outperform the market, require only relatively small investment and are therefore accessible to almost everyone. The trusts we've picked invest all over the world, offering you exposure to global stock markets.

Also this week, check out Absolute Beginners, a special feature on investment clubs, how they work, what they do and how you can start one.

Investors Chronicle complete with Investment Trust Tips for 1998 is on sale Friday 23rd January from your newsagent. Price £2.50.

FT FINANCIAL TIMES

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In the July Budget, the Chancellor announced that tax exempt savings schemes will change in April 1999. As a result you may not be able to continue to enjoy the current tax benefits offered by a PEP. However, the Government has announced that a new tax privileged vehicle is to be introduced – the Individual Savings Account, or ISA for short. Full details have yet to be confirmed and we are currently in discussion with the Government as to the future implications for PEPs. The value to you of the tax benefits will depend on your own circumstances. The price of investments and the income from them can go down as well as up. You may not get back as much as you invest. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. M&G do not offer investment advice or make any recommendations regarding investments – we only promote the packaged products and services of the M&G marketing group. *Source: M&G statistics. Income growth in 1997 compared to the first full year since Fund was launched in March 1993. †Source: Micropal, 1st means top quartile performance, gross income reinvested for Blue Chip over 5 years and for Managed Income since launch on 1.3.93 and Corporate Bond since launch on 2.5.94. M&G Unit Trusts are managed by M&G Securities Limited (Regulated by IMRO and The Personal Investment Authority). Issued by M&G Financial Services Limited (Regulated by The Personal Investment Authority). Registered Office: M&G House, Victoria Road, Chelmsford CM1 1FB.

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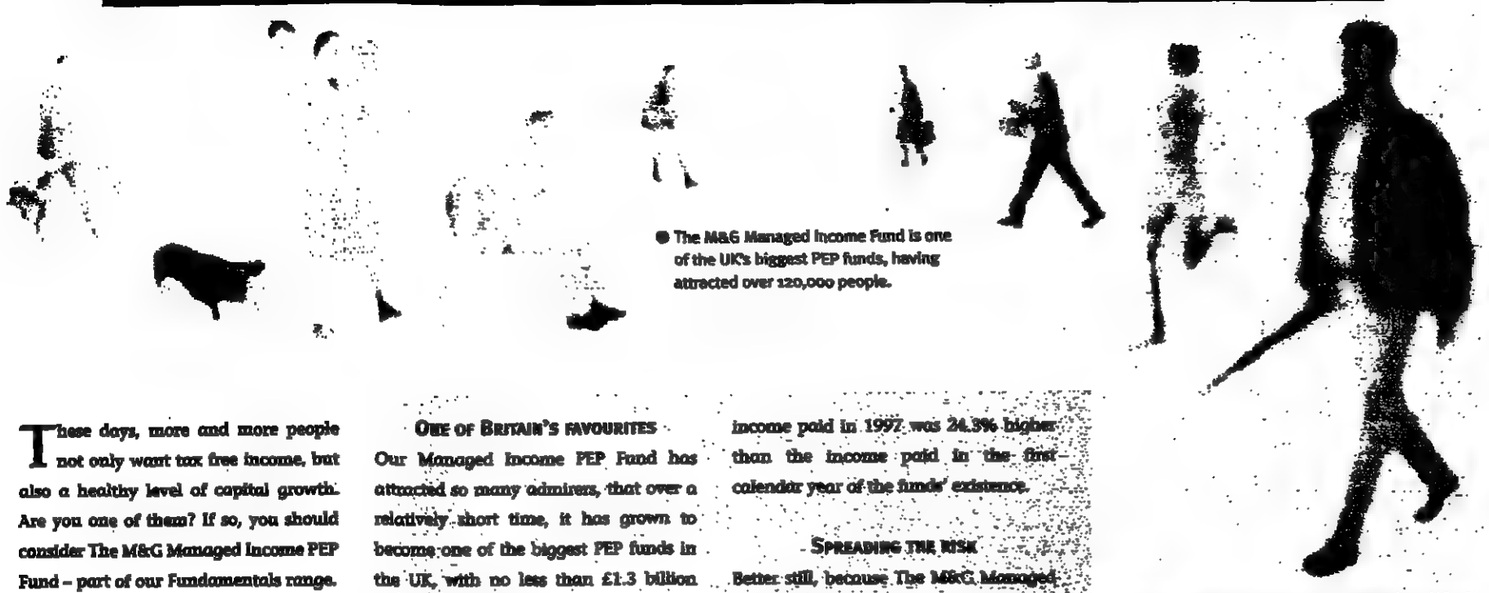

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COMMENT

ANNE ASHWORTH
Personal Finance Editor

Protect us from insurers

The insurance industry has a fine disregard for its customers. Its prime concern is to sell, regardless of the consequences. Anyone disagreeing with these statements and continuing to believe that those smiling men at insurers have hearts of gold will be badly shaken by the latest example of their perfidy.

Some 15 million people have been prudent enough to protect their debts against accident, sickness or unemployment (see page 64). So keen are insurers to promote this costly type of cover that they are willing to pay commissions of as much as 40 per cent to institutions that provide credit. However, insurers have been less eager to disclose an important fact about these policies. Had borrowers been aware of this salient detail they might have been less happy to pay their premiums, which can increase the repayments on a £5,000 loan from £179 to £206 a month.

Some insurance companies have apparently known for years that customers receiving payouts under repayment policies could have their unemployment benefits cut if money did not go straight to the lender. Payments covering mortgages, fortunately, are mostly exempt from the rule. Other companies claim only to have discovered this risk when it emerged that one policyholder was receiving just £3 a month of his Jobseeker's Allowance. He is now surely regretting his earlier concern that his creditors be repaid whatever his own circumstances.

This raises a number of questions. If the insurers were aware that benefits could be forfeit, why did they not change the wording of their policies to prevent such an outcome? Why did the others who plead ignorance not bother to familiarise themselves with Social Security rulings? Or were they all so afraid of disclosing this pitfall that they preferred to stay silent, lest prospective policyholders became unwilling to sign on the dotted line?

You might think that insurers will hasten to remedy the problem. But little in their past behaviour suggests that they prefer to put anything right provided that they can continue to hoodwink the public. Here the Government should step in. Ministers wish us to become more self-reliant. This means allowing the insurance companies to have more responsibility for our welfare. They should not be allowed to enjoy these lucrative new opportunities unless they can guarantee to deal fairly with us.

Savings sickener

THE awfulness of the individual savings account should not be allowed to obscure the imperfections of the personal equity plan. We must deplore the demise of the Pep, part of an insubtle government plan to reduce the amount of tax relief given to savers. But, at the same time, the performance of many Peps has been so poor that thousands of holders might wish that they had never heard of this soon-to-expire acronym.

The latest BESt Investment survey shows that dozens of Peps failed to match the promises made in their advertising. Meanwhile, their managers have not suffered adversely for their lack of flair, continuing to collect their fees regardless. More depressing still is that the returns on Isas will not be any better. Under the Government's current proposals, they will be so laden with charges that even stunning feats of investment skill will be diminished.

Serps rebate lifted after pressure

The Government has bowed to pressure and increased the value of the rebate it pays out of the national insurance fund for those that opt out of the state earnings related pension scheme (Serps).

If the Government had not increased the rebate, then, as first highlighted by *The Times*, millions of people would have had to contract back into Serps, as the Serps benefits they were giving up would not be matched by investing the rebate. The change means those with personal pensions will now get more money from the Government in exchange for giving up their rights to Serps.

John Denham, Pensions Minister, has been forced to increase the rebate because changes affecting tax relief on pension funds announced in the last Budget substantially cut pension fund returns. Mr Denham at first insisted that returns would not lead to millions having to rejoin Serps. But after intensive lobbying by the industry he was forced to do a U-turn last week.

He said: "I have considered the Government Actuary's advice and the impact of trends in the pensions industry on the resources available to the national insurance fund. From April 1999, the first opportunity available, I propose to increase the age-related rebates for personal pensions. The rebate at the youngest ages will rise from 3.4 per cent to 3.8 per cent, with proportionately small increases at other ages, with the cap remaining at 9 per cent."

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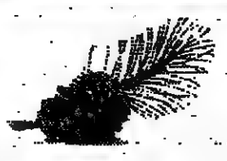

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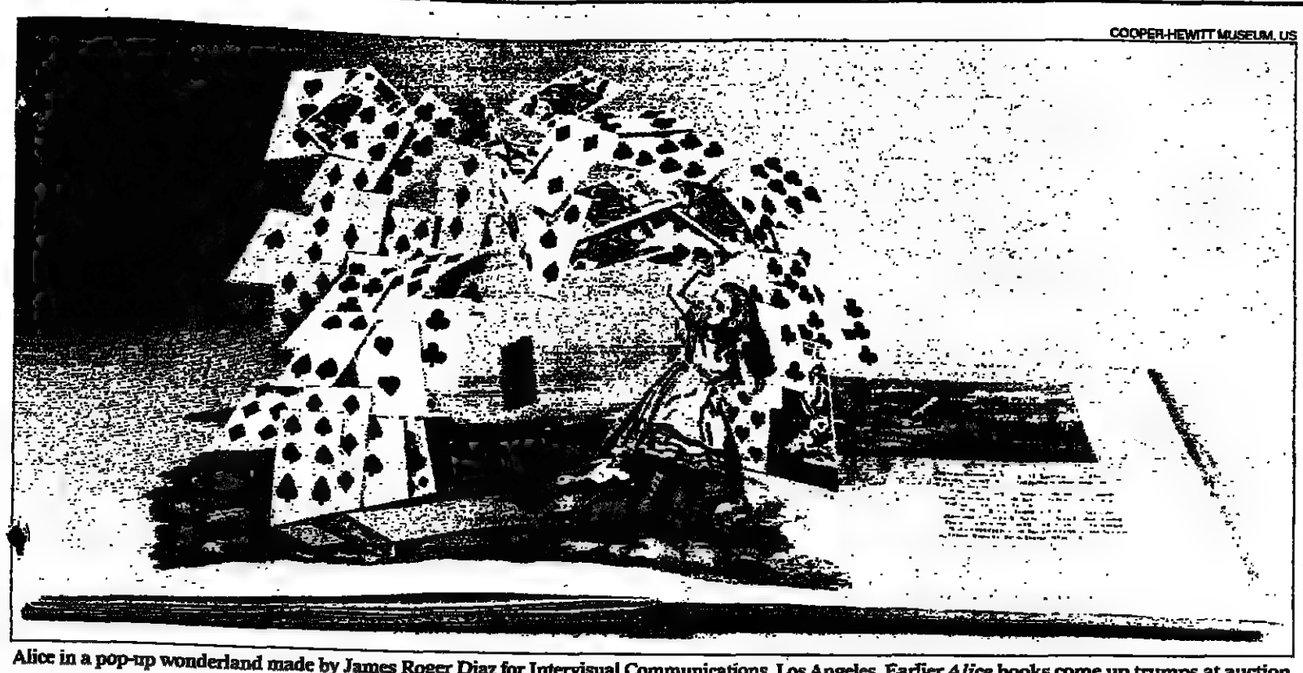

Alice in a pop-up wonderland made by James Roger Diaz for Intervisual Communications, Los Angeles. Earlier *Alice* books come up trumps at auction

Alice at the auction house

Fantasy and investment can blend together. **Conal Gregory** reports

Collectors love a centenary. This year is the 100th anniversary of the death of Lewis Carroll, the author whose private predilections now raise almost as much interest as his universally popular children's books. Dealers and auctioneers predict a surge of interest in material associated with Carroll, otherwise known as Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, Oxford mathematics don and amateur photogapher.

"Good Lewis Carroll memorabilia is a buoyant market," said David Park, of Bonhams, the auctioneer, who last month sold a 1969 New York edition of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* with Salvador Dali illustrations for £1,955 (including buyers' premium). This was a mint copy, limited to 2,700 and signed by the artist on the title page. That the volume was in its original packing may be raised the price by 20 per cent.

Great care needs to be taken over different editions of Dodgson's books. Several issues were undertaken, even in the same year. Dedications can boost prices dramatically. Condition is also a key factor, accounting for at least 10 to 15 per cent of the price.

An 1865 unsigned first edition of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was sold by Sotheby's for £45,000 in 1986. Today it would fetch six figures.

Foreign copies are also in demand. The first French edition, in original blue pictorial cloth from 1869, dedicated to Ella Chlora Williams, one of the small girls that Dodgson was fond of photographing, sold for £879 at Phillips in 1994. A German example from the same year with a similar dedication fetched £862.

Although the early issues with Sir John Tenniel's illustrations are greatly sought after, other limited editions can also bring high prices. The 1907 Arthur Rackham edition, limited to 1,130, sold last year for £800 (plus 10 per cent buyers' premium) at Christie's South Kensington.

Dodgson's *Alice's Adventures Under Ground* can vary enormously in price. Leo Harrison, an antiquarian dealer, says that a facsimile of the 1886 original with white end-papers costs £200, but one with black end-papers is £350. A dedication can alter this: a copy inscribed to Elizabeth Dodgson (the author's elder sister) was expected to make £700 to £1,000 at Bonham's in 1993, but actually realised £4,600. One dedicated to an Ella Bickersteth made £2,070 at Phillips four years ago.

Expect to pay about £800 for a first issue, with yellow end-papers, of *Nursery Alice* from 1890, but only £240 for the third issue. A copy with 20 coloured illustrations after Tenniel, and inscribed to "Lottie Rix from the Author — March 26 1890", sold for £1,552 at Phillips.

Also popular are *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There* and the later *The Hunting of the Snark*. Dedicated first editions to Ella Chlora Williams made £1,840 and £1,265 at Phillips in 1994.

Dodgson's autographs are very collectable. The specialist auctioneer is Vennett-Smith, of Gotham, Nottinghamshire, and in the past two years an undated signature has made £187 and a signed note of four lines £209, in both cases including the buyers' premium.

The value can be enhanced by the signature being on a letter or a photograph. A letter to Amy Walters made £1,265 at Sotheby's two years ago. An 1878 letter to her, together with one of Dodgson's photographs of her when 21, realised £2,300.

It is likely that photographs taken by Dodgson of the small children who inspired his writing will continue to rise in price. One of Ella Monier-Williams in a white dress, reclining on a chaise longue, dating from 1865, was sold by Phillips for £1,265. The same photograph, but inscribed to her husband in 1879, made £2,300. Dodgson's print of Ella with her younger brother, kneeling and looking at dolls, fetched £2,530.

On March 20, Christie's will sell a painting that Dodgson had above his college mantelpiece and which would have often been seen by Alice Liddell, who inspired his first children's book. *Girl with Lilacs*, by Sophie Anderson (1823-1903), is still in its original Bourlet's frame and is expected to make £12,000 to £18,000.

Lewis Carroll items should be especially collectable in 1998

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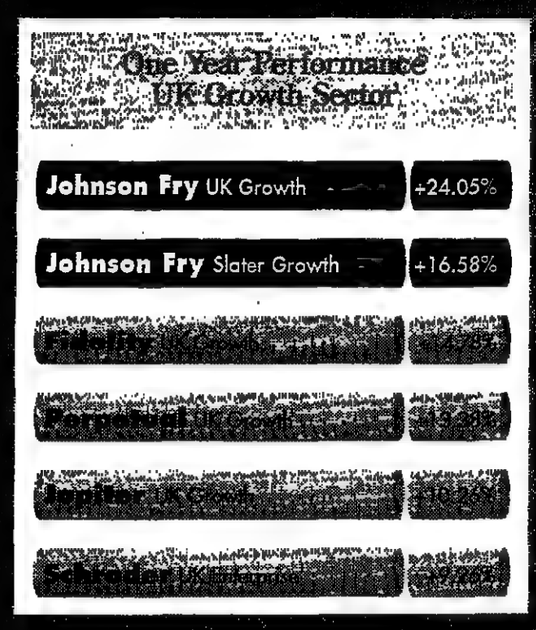

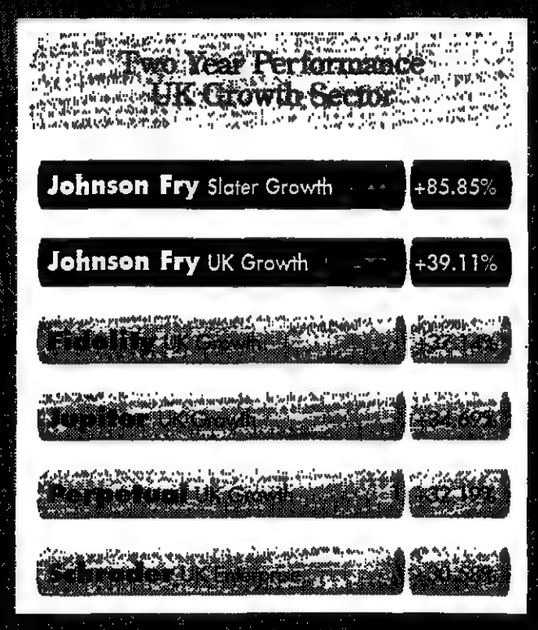

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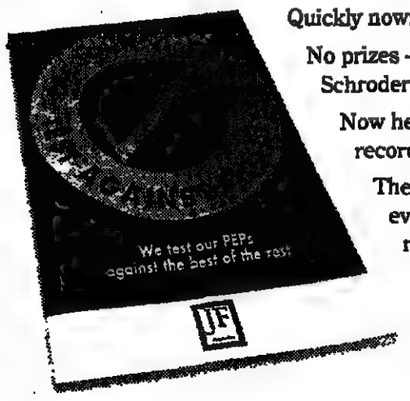

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Coleraine in Halifax computer slip

Loan protection policies are not all they are cracked up to be, says **Gavin Lumsden**

Premium comedy of errors

Up to 7.5 million people may have been mis-sold credit insurance policies designed to pay off their debts if they lose their job or become too ill to work.

Many of these policies clash with social security rules by making payouts to claimants rather than direct to lenders, it emerged this week. Claimants who receive the insurance payments can have the money deducted from their jobseeker's allowance when the benefit is means-tested against their income after six months.

The scandal was exposed when it was revealed that one unemployed man in County Durham had been left with just £3 a month to live on after the local Benefits Agency decided to deduct £157 — the payout for his car and credit card insurance — from his monthly jobseeker's allowance of £160.

Perversely, the man would have received his full allowance if the insurance payout had gone direct to Barclays, his bank, from whom he had borrowed the money.

The discovery leaves millions of prudent borrowers with potentially worthless insurance policies and raises the prospect of another mis-selling scandal to rival that over private pensions.

The Association of British Insurers said it was seeking urgent clarification from the Government. A spokesman said: "These policies were sold on the basis that they would benefit holders and not just cancel out the state benefit. It seems harsh that for the want of a change in the wording of the policy people are being penalised for being prudent."

A total of 15 million people have taken the precaution of ensuring repayments on their loans are made even when they are not earning. Last year they pumped £1.7 billion of premiums into the coffers of banks, lenders and insurers who sell credit insurance policies. Up to 40 per cent of this money could have gone in commission to salesmen and brokers, it has also emerged. Worse, insurers and lenders should have known about the problem as the rules date back ten years to when income support was first introduced by the Conservatives.

According to Consolidated Financial Assurance, the leading provider of credit insurance, the worst affected will be those who have protected personal loans taken out to buy cars or go on holidays. These policies account for more than half the credit insurance sold and almost all make payments directly to claimants.

The "discovery" of the benefit rule is bad news too for many of the four million homeowners who have taken out mortgage payment protection insurance (MPPI) policies. One in four homebuyers now has this insurance, prompted by the fact that, since October 1995 when social security rules were changed, the unemployed no longer get state help with their mortgage payments for the first nine months that they are out of work.

The positive news is that social security rules explicitly disregard payments by MPPI policies when assessing a person's income. In theory this means that claimants can receive the money and their benefits will remain intact.

However, the Benefits Agency staff will only exclude insurance money if it is used to pay interest on a mortgage, arguing that this is for "standard housing allowance". Many MPPI policies pay more than this as they give borrowers the option to ensure that an extra 25 per cent is paid out to cover other household costs and improvements or contribute to the endowment paying off the mortgage. The Benefits Agency will include this excess as part of your income if it is paid directly into your account.

In other words, if you have taken the excess option with lenders such as the Halifax, Midland and Barclays, whose insurance policies pay the policyholder, you could be faced with cuts in your benefit if you lose your job.

To make matters worse policyholders who attempt to amend the situation by redirecting payments to their lenders can be accused of benefit fraud.

This extraordinary situation contradicts the Government's avowed intention to get more people to insure themselves. Insurers claim that the problem has arisen only since November. One leading figure in the industry is reported to have been shocked that they ever let the rules through in the first place. However, this does not fully square with the other claim that they have sought clarification on the rules for years.

The fact that the issue has surfaced only now has provoked accusations that the Government is secretly clamping down on its welfare bill. The Department of Social Security, however, has denied that there has been a change in policy or that new instructions have been issued to Benefits Agency staff.

What seems to have happened is that Benefits Agency employees are now working alongside staff at jobcentres and they are simply implementing the rules more consistently.

Derek Foster, the Labour MP for Bishop Auckland, highlighted the problem and is calling on the Government to settle the issue quickly. Mr Foster said: "In the new era of self-reliance it would be strange if the Government didn't trust people to handle their own income."

Keith Bradley, a junior minister at the DSS, is considering his options to prevent a crisis. Either insurance payments sent to policyholders will be cleared or there will have to be a wholesale rewriting of policy contracts. Mr Bradley is understood to have called an urgent meeting to review the situation.

Doleful: take out the wrong policy and you could find that the Government reclaims the full monty from your benefits when your insurer pays out

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WEEKEND MONEY is edited by Anne Ashworth

Canine offence league

It's time to drop the 'dog' funds, says **Caroline Merrell** as BESt Investment cites the worst performers

Rough luck: unlike our canine friends, a 'dog' investment should not be for life

Eight funds from M&G, one of the UK's biggest investment managers, and three from Prudential make a starring appearance in BESt Investment's "Spot the Dog" league of poorly performing funds which should be disposed of forthwith.

BESt Investment names the 60 plus widely held funds that have shown consistently poor performance over the past three years. The financial adviser analyses the performance funds against their benchmark indices in each of the last three years. According to its criteria, the M&G British Opportunity Trust has underperformed by 32 per cent, the M&G UK Equity fund by 23.5 per cent and the M&G Smaller Companies fund by 20.7 per cent.

Other dogs include the Barclays 500 trust, which has underperformed 26.9 per cent, and the Friends Provident Stewardship Income fund, which has underperformed by 25.7 per cent. The position of bottom dog was occupied by the Equitable Special Situations trust, which underperformed by 34 per cent. A sum of £100 invested three years ago would now be worth only £119.

BESt Investment also looked at the returns generated by European funds which are becoming increasingly popular as a home for personal equity plan (PEP) money. According to BESt, the worst performer in this category was Framlington Continental Smaller Companies which underperformed the sector by 31 per cent — £100 invested three years ago would now be worth only £122.

UNIT TRUST PRICES — PAGE 31

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KEITH FLOYD

Mr Blair don't tell me when to stop drinking

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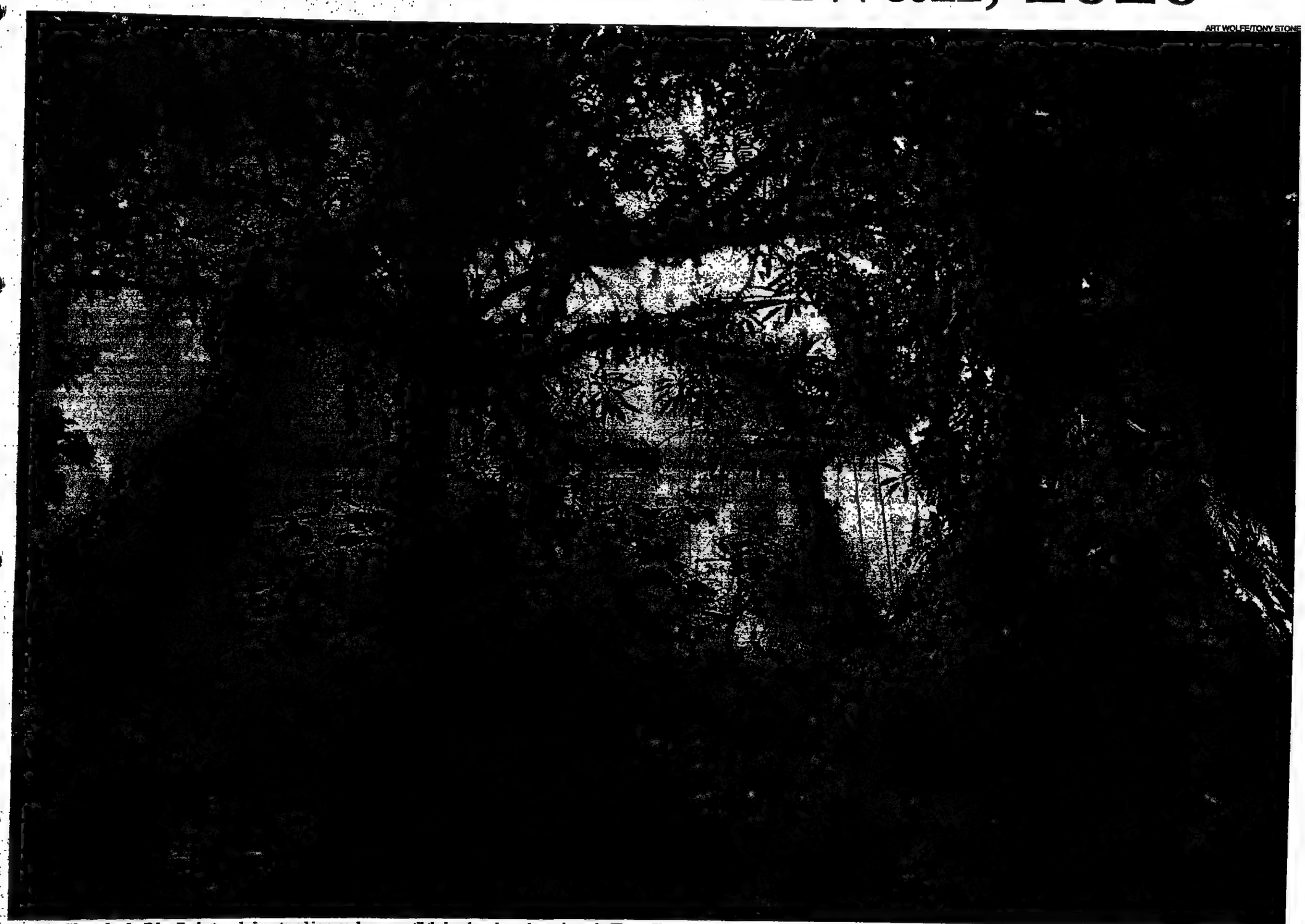
THE TIMES

WEEKEND

SATURDAY JANUARY 24 1998

Welcome to Cornwall, 2020

ART WOLFE/TONY STONE



Plants for the Eden Project are being stored in greenhouses until their colossal new home is ready. They will eventually be housed in a futuristic kilometre-long greenhouse, wider than the length of a football pitch

A remote corner of England will soon become the largest greenhouse on earth. **Jane Owen** meets the man behind the £74 million Eden Project

Although it is midwinter, the temperature is a sweltering humid 40C. The sweat drips off your face as you move out of the sudden tropical rainstorm to shelter beneath a towering ebony tree. Nearby you notice rare rainforest plants which are used to cure Aids and cancer. The rain stops as suddenly as it began.

You follow a path through the Amazonian jungle for some minutes and the temperature falls slightly. You pass dense thickets of bamboo, the air gets drier, the smell of rotting vegetation is replaced with the fragrance of herbs and suddenly you are surrounded by flowering cacti. Brazil? Southern California? No, this is an abandoned clay pit near St Austell in Cornwall and you are in a kilometre-long greenhouse wider than the length of a football pitch.

But this is more exciting than football. This is the year 2020 and you are taking the official five-hour tour of the Eden Project. You are also — at the moment — a figment of Tim Smit's imagination.

I went to meet Mr Smit in Cornwall. The 43-year-old rock music producer was wearing an old jumper and muddy wellingtons. Liquorice, his pet Vietnamese pot-bellied pig, pursued him as he climbed into his even muddier estate car. Mr Smit might seem like a dreamer but he has already stunned the garden world by restoring the 57-acre Lost Gardens of Heligan, and he is very serious about the Eden Project.

The first bulldozers roll on to the building site at the beginning of April; around 85 per cent of the £74 million cost of the project has been raised; 30 of the world's leading botanical gardens, including Kew, are supplying advice and plants are already arriving — to be temporarily stored in greenhouses until their colossal new home is ready. The Eden Project is intended, quite simply, as a scientific foundation dedicated to helping us to understand mankind's dependency on plants.

Mr Smit tells me how he got the idea for the Eden Project. He and Philip McMillan Browse, the former director of RHS Wisley and now the horticulturalist at Heligan, had discussed building a large glasshouse "to house plants which have changed the world because we are trying to get kids interested in plants.

"Then one day I was with a local architect, Jonathan Ball. We were watching the sun go down over the St Austell clay pits. There is a moment when they look like Ayers Rock. Suddenly there was the idea. Jonathan put me in touch with Nicholas Grimshaw, the architect of the Waterloo station Eurostar extension.

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هكذا من الأصل

On the eve of the Chinese New Year, how are Hong Kong veterans finding life back here?

Ghosts of the colonial past

When Simon Vickers had his first Chinese meal in Britain after nearly 20 years in Hong Kong, he was sick. At Chinese New Year next week he will be more careful where he eats. He will choose an authentic dinner in London's Chinatown, with a group of fellow Brits who returned from the colony after its handover to China last June.

There were 31,400 people from the UK living in Hong Kong when Chris Patten, the Governor, handed over to the Chinese, according to figures from the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office.

About half of those working in government or for the police decided to return to Britain, but have not found adjustment easy. Like the strange hybrid of Chinese food found in Britain, their return to a country many last saw in the 1970s sees them fall awkwardly between two cultures.

They are native strangers, ghosts of a colonial past, who are finding some aspects of coming home extremely odd, such as space, springtime and junk mail.

They left behind about two-and-a-half million Hong Kong Chinese, who have the right to British nationality, but not the right of residency in Britain. Many British civil servants were worried that their colleagues would not be able to leave if the situation in Hong Kong became intolerable under Chinese rule and, after much lobbying last year, the British Government said that, while not changing their legal position, it would view Hong Kong asylum seekers with sympathy and discretion.

Bob Wilson, aged 46, who has returned from Hong Kong after 17 years' working in the Overseas Civil Service, says that the rights of nationality problem was one of the few aspects of British behaviour that disappointed the Hong Kong Chinese.

There were scare stories about three million people flooding into the UK, but to Hong Kong it was a ridiculous proposition, Mr Wilson says, adding: "No Hong Kong Chinese would willingly come to Britain: it's not as economically dynamic, you can't get good food and the weather is ghastly. But they felt hurt, nevertheless, because they thought they should have been given the right."

Scaremongers need not have worried. In the past three years the numbers of Hong Kong Chinese emigrating to their favoured destinations of Canada and Australia have dropped, and the Alliance of Hong Kong Expatriates estimates that up to a fifth have returned to Hong Kong, albeit with foreign passports tucked in their back pockets.

Mr Vickers was the seventh generation of his family to have served in the Overseas Civil Service since his ancestor, Sir Henry Clinton, lost a battle in the American War of Independence. But Mr Vickers's three teenage sons are now having to adapt to life in Devon where, having taken on so many ways from their Hong Kong birthplace, the other children have called them "Chinks".

Mr Vickers's first shock on returning to Britain was hearing John Humphrys on the Radio 4 *Today* programme tearing a strip off Tony Blair. "It jarred after the Asian environment, where everything is consensual and behind the scenes; the Hong Kong Chinese are terrified of party politics," he says. "But it makes my heart leap to see that here there is democracy in a deep sense."

However, he says, the British wear their freedom so lightly that they are careless with it. He sees this in the way his 16-year-old son, schooled in the Hong Kong work ethic, comes home to say there is no respect for the teachers in the classroom; he sees it in the deluge of junk mail that comes pouring through the letterbox and in the consumerist frenzy of advertising.

For Richard Hoare, 48, who spent 25 years in Hong Kong, including a spell as private secretary to Mr Patten, Britain seems to luxuriate in space. "One of our most lovely discoveries has been the countryside," he says. Now retired, he and his wife revel in the scenery and the dramatic weather during their walks along the Sussex Downs.

Their eight-year-old daughter is also having to adjust to living on a bigger island. "She's having to cope with learning hockey and netball for the first time; they don't have enough space for those sports in Hong Kong."

All of those returning noticed how they had to slow down to adapt to a pace of life they find leisurely. Mr Wilson has to keep his hand off the car horn in his quiet Surrey village, and learn to be patient with another British-Asian tradition: the tea break.

"It is frustrating when you try to get things done, you have to slow down about five gears," he says. "You do, however, appreciate other things. I had completely forgotten how fantastic the British spring was; it just happens for free all around you."

Like Mr Hoare, Mr Wilson misses most the people he had to leave behind in Hong Kong. Most of his friends and work colleagues were Chinese, and now he worries for them. "It's pretty grim for them at the moment, so I feel for them, and want to go back and see how they're doing."

He has his own problems to deal with, too, such as finding work when employers are indifferent to where or what he has done.

"The UK is still pretty parochial. I start talking about the Far East and their eyes glaze over," he says.

Mr Blair's "Cool Britannia" has made itself cool by distancing itself from the Britannia of its colonial past, says Mike Waters, 47, whose civil service job in Hong Kong ended after 21 years. He says there is a danger of making returned colonials the scapegoats for history. "Some people see those who were in the Administration Office as Neanderthal," he says. "Now, Britain looks much more towards Europe, whereas 30 years ago people were interested in a Commonwealth."

It is an odd paradox for Mr Waters when he walks down the street: he first notices how multiracial Britain has become since he left, but then registers feeling odd because being white is not exotic here.

Many of those returning settled into the area where they grew up, to help them rediscover their Britishness and their beginnings. Yet a common complaint is that their neighbours have no interest in where they have come from and what they have become. "People said to me, 'don't tell me about your travels, I've been quite happy in Barnes'," Mr Vickers says. "They mean, 'it will probably bore me and make me less satisfied with my life'."

So when they get together for their Chinese New Year celebratory lunch next Saturday, the returned civil servants will relish the opportunity to talk all they like about their old and new homes, chewing over the sweet and sour of returning to Britain.

They will go native in one respect: having served in the strict ranks of the Civil Service, they will meet as friends. "We were extremely hierarchical in Hong Kong; something we picked up from the Chinese," Mr Vickers says.

"It struck me that when we all met up in Britain again, it was the first time that we had been British and equal together. And that was good."

HELEN RUMBELOW

PA

New Year celebrations in London's Chinatown. This year's revels will be the first since the handover of Hong Kong to the mainland

ANDREW HASSON

At home: Hong Kong veteran Richard Hoare takes stock

APEX

Simon Vickers's children have been called "Chinks" at school

1998: THE YEAR OF THE TIGER

THEY MIGHT not believe it right now, but this is the year of the Queen and Richard Branson. And Tim Henman and Posh Spice can expect a boost soon for their troubled careers. All were born in the Year of the Tiger, which on Chinese New Year on Wednesday ousts the Ox from the calendar for the first time in 12 years.

The new year has a central significance in Chinese mythology. It is the day when the kitchen god is sent off to heaven to inform the Jade Emperor of the events in each household during the past year. To entice him to report only the good things, he is dispatched bearing a syrupy cake to coat his lips with sweetness.

This is not just one big party, however. Nearly every event has a symbolic purpose. For example, *yu*, the Chinese word for fish, is the same as the word for abundance, so during the ceremonial meal Chinese families leave some fish over, symbolically feeding the family for the rest of the year. Even the firecrackers that will be set off are not just for pleasure, but to banish the Nin monster, destroyer of homes and crops.

Although it is a predominantly Chinese event, thousands of non-Chinese will join in the celebrations. So pervasive is Chinese culture, indeed, that a third of the world's population will be taking part.

Behind this public face, however, most of the feasting will take place among Chinese families rather than in city streets, as befits a celebration which has more in common with Christmas than with the Western new year.

After the supposedly peaceful year of the Ox, we can look forward to 12 months dominated by displays of courage and power. Those born in this most competitive of years can celebrate. For the others, a year in the jungle is not an attractive prospect.

NIGEL CLIFF

Drink? Yes, please nanny

DUNCAN RIDGELEY

The Michelin guide says our pubs are the best – so why can't we drink after 11pm? asks **Keith Floyd**

I finish the day's tasks at 11.30pm and toddle down to the Ryders Bar in the village, accompanied by my wife and our two basset hounds, for a nightcap. The bar is pretty busy and a bunch of golf caddies are playing pool while the usual bejewelled suspects chat noisily at the bar. I order our usual drinks — a large whisky, ice and water and one straight whisky — toss some Bonios to the dogs, and watch a couple of kids in the corner building a spaceship with Lego.

Some drinks later, we are feeling peckish, so we borrow a mobile phone from Jan, the bar owner, and call Jake at the Slow Boat to China for some Singapore fried noodles, chilli prawns, lemon chicken and hot and spicy beef.

At about a 12.45am, Jake rolls up with the food, a couple of bowls and some chopsticks and I pay him about eight quid. We clear a space at the bar, order more drinks and start eating. It is a typical evening in paradise.

Because the restaurants around the village square are emptying, the bars are filling up. This perfectly normal scenario, part of my everyday life, is taking place in Spain. No one is drunk: everybody is happy.

What a contrast to the wretched experience of a night out in an English pub. Just as you are beginning to enjoy yourself, you are thrown out and, although you probably arrived at 9.30pm, you were already too late to order food. To make matters worse, you had to hire a babysitter or a dogsitter, because dogs and kids are not welcome, unless you want to drink in the family room or garden.

You also run the risk of being banned from smoking at the bar or in the eating area; you can't even be offered a pure beef British banger from a chafing dish on the bar because it is illegal.

Now the esteemed *Michelin Guide to Hotels and Restaurants* has created a special category for our so-called "gastro-pubs", where the food is often as good, if not better, than many restaurants.

No other country has had such an honour from Michelin. The problem is that we have stuffy, backward and oppressive laws which tell grown-ups when they should go to bed. Compare this with Spain, where Serrano hams hang above the bar wreathed in strong tobacco smoke; where trays of anchovies in vinegar, potato salad, meatballs, prawns, toasted red peppers *et al* are available in bite-sized portions virtually all day and all night.

At my local meat shop, when the butcher is busy, he will offer you a drink, usually anisette, while you are waiting. So you sip away and have a fag while you feast your eyes on fresh lamb's liver, mountains of whole oxtails and dark hung beef thick with creamy fat sitting smugly on its bones next to ox hearts.

Strange, isn't it, that Spain, like Britain, is a member of the EU? But whereas the Spanish are perfectly happy to take advantage of, or hide behind, such EU legislation as suits them, there is no way they let it interfere with their lifestyle, largely based on eating and drinking what and when they like.

Michelin: now recognises pubs

Let me make it clear that the miserable experiences we are forced to endure in a British pub — now belatedly, but rightly, recognised by a bunch of French tyre-makers as one of the world's greatest institutions — is not the fault of the landlord. It is the fault of the British nanny state's vinegar-veined, puritanical attitude to pleasure, mixed with the mentality of an establishment that rolls happily on to its back with its legs in the air at the behest of boorish Brussels bullies.

Sadly, I have no space to recount the horrors I experienced when I ran my own pub in Devon: the police raids, the visits from the environmental department, the absurd planning conditions, the VAT investigations, the weights and measures and the insults, accusations and vindictiveness of the gastronomic Gestapo.

All this in addition to the absurd opening hours and the inevitable legislation of the social and labour charter (whatever *that* means) which will, as sure as Gordon's goes with Schweppes, terminally cripple the industry.

It is time to change the laws: time to loosen up. In short, with respect and apologies to John Lennon: all we are saying is give drink a chance.

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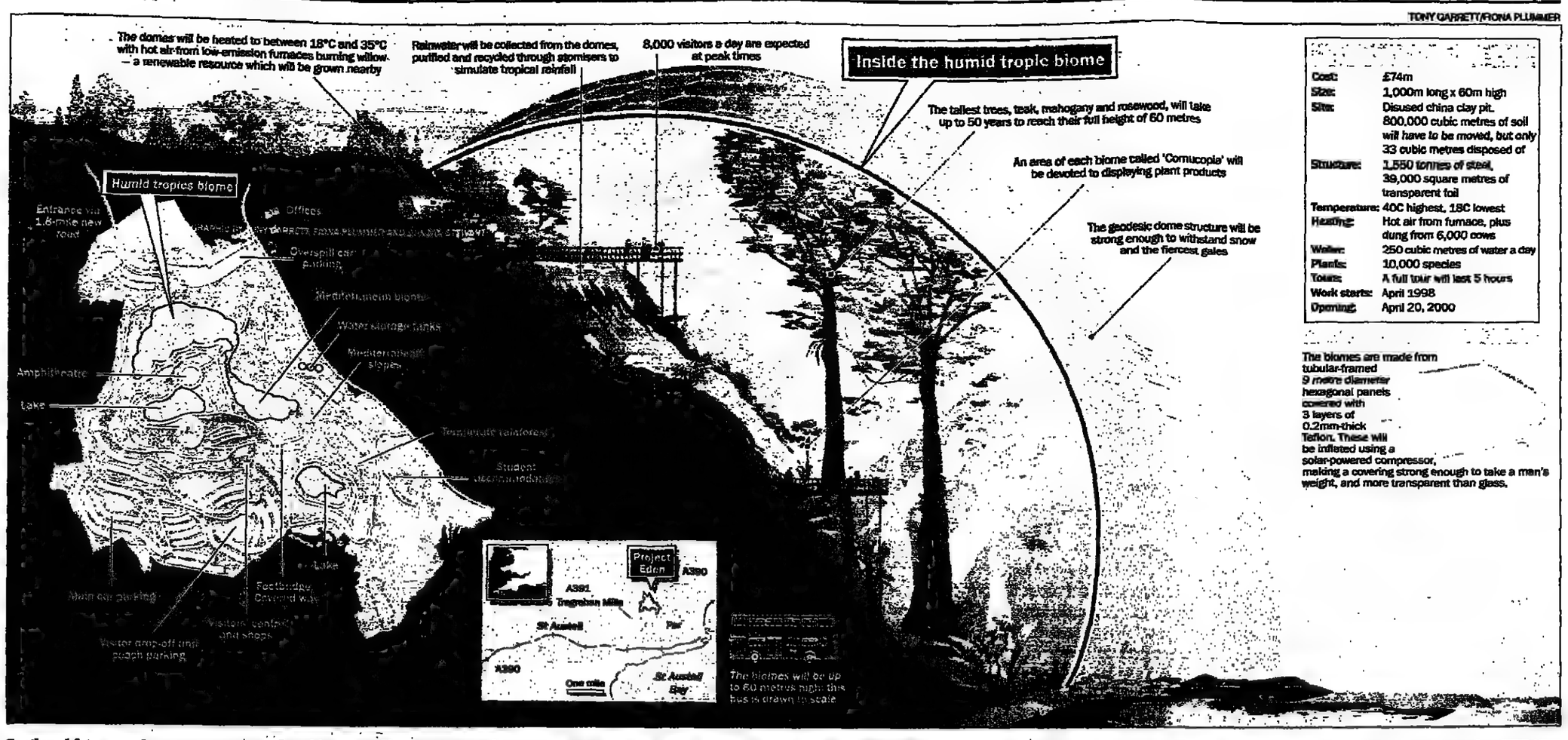
TONY GARRETT/FIONA PLUMMER



Cost:	£74m
Size:	1,000m long x 60m high
Site:	Disused china clay pit. 800,000 cubic metres of soil will have to be moved, but only 33 cubic metres disposed of
Structure:	1,550 tonnes of steel, 39,000 square metres of transparent foil
Temperature:	40C highest, 18C lowest
Heating:	Hot air from furnace, plus dung from 6,000 cows
Water:	250 cubic metres of water a day
Plants:	10,000 species
Tours:	A full tour will last 5 hours
Work starts:	April 1998
Opening:	April 20, 2000

The biomes are made from tubular-framed 9 metre diameter hexagonal panels covered with 3 layers of 0.2mm-thick Teflon. These will be inflated using a solar-powered compressor, making a covering strong enough to take a man's weight, and more transparent than glass.

Continued from page 1

I asked him if he wanted to build the *eighth wonder of the world.*"

A revolutionary idea needs a revolutionary home, and that is what the Eden Project will have. A series of huge steel-framed domes will be built against the cliff face of the clay pit. The domes will be covered with layers of a super-strong and ferociously high-tech transparent polymer foil which will be kept inflated by solar-powered compressors.

"It is a very light building for its size," says David Kirkland of Nicholas Grimshaw and Partners, explaining that the strength of the foil — it is strong enough for a man to walk on — allows the designers to reduce the *number of steel supports.*

The geometry of the structures is designed to trap as much solar heat as possible. When extra heat is needed — and for tropical rainforest plants to flourish the temperature has to be maintained at a steady 35C — as much energy as possible will come from biomass. Willows, grown nearby, will be burned in a vast, low-emission furnace which will blast hot air into the domes. Another eco-friendly source of fuel is the dung of 6,000 cows which will be delivered in the form of dried slurry.

According to green-efficiency calculations by Alistair Guthrie, who works for consulting engineers Ove Arup, the biomass will release about as much carbon dioxide when it is burnt as it absorbs when it is growing, so there should be zero effect on the environment. Solar and biomass energy should supply two-thirds of the heating and the rest will come from ordinary gas.

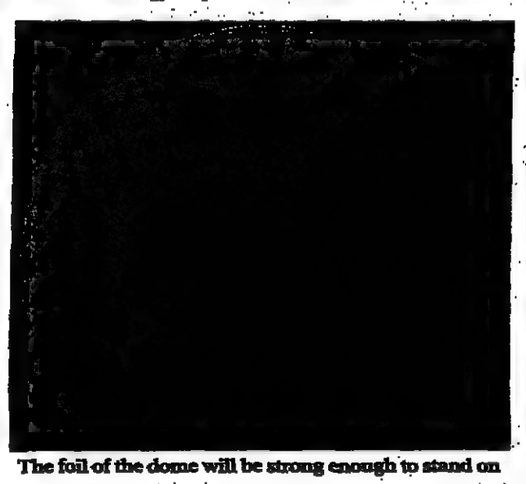
The site is 30 metres below the water table, and massive drainage and overflow systems will have to be installed so that the site does not turn into a giant lake. At the same time the Eden Project will need huge quantities of pure water to recreate the atmosphere of a rainforest. So rainwater will be collected as it runs off the dome and pumped up to tanks at the top of the site that have, until now, been used for storing slurry.

The extraordinary biosphere created by computer graphics

The first visitors to Eden may not appreciate how much environmentally sensitive ingenuity has been expended on the project's infrastructure but they should be impressed by the visitor facilities. Structures like upturned boats, built of local clay, will house video displays explaining what is going on beneath Eden's vast domes. One obvious horticultural question is how tropical plants will be pollinated without the insects and, in some cases, animals which normally do the job. *Durian fruit,* for instance, which is normally pollinated by bats, will present Eden staff with a challenge.

The interior of Eden will be arranged as two "biomes" — one recreating the conditions of equatorial rainforest, the other recreating a Mediterranean climate. Teak, mahogany and rosewood will have enough space to grow to their full size — nearly 200 feet high in some cases. *Prunus africana,* which yields a drug to treat prostate enlargement, will be grown alongside coffee, cocoa and rubber; *Castanospermum australe* or the Moreton Bay chestnut, which may help combat Aids, will flourish beside tropical bamboos growing 300mm a day, olives, citruses and *medicinal plants. From California* alone there will be 6,000 flowering plants. There is nothing small-minded about Mr Smit's ambitions.

To round off my visit Mr Smit took me on a tour of the glasshouse. Here I discovered Eden's first pest, a large *garden snail* edging its way up a *Bhut orellana,* a natural food colourant. Should I squash it, I asked Mr Smit? "Yes," he said, and then had second thoughts. We decided to chuck it outside, to give it a sporting chance of bringing a little imperfection to Eden.


The foil of the dome will be strong enough to stand on

■ Cost: £74 million, 50 per cent from the Millennium Commission, £10 million from the European Regional Development Fund and the rest from local authorities and public and private sponsorship.

■ Plant statistics: 10,000 species will be represented in two interior "biomes" — tropical rainforest and Mediterranean where temperatures will be maintained between 18C and 40C; there will be a third outdoor "biome". Each biome will have a wild area and a market displaying products derived from that biome's plants.

RICHARD LAPPAS

A man with a vision: Tim Smit at the clay pit near St Austell in Cornwall which will house the Eden Project

COLLAPSE OF AN AMERICAN DREAM

Biosphere 2, in the Arizona desert, was not a success

HEAD north from Tuscon, Arizona, along Highway 77 and Biosphere 2 emerges from the desert like a mirage. Glass and steel "biomes" built on a two-acre site contain five climatic zones with rainforest, savannah, desert, ocean and marsh all housed in the most airtight buildings ever constructed by man.

Where Tim Smit's Eden Project in Cornwall modestly aims to educate people about mankind's dependency on plants, Ted Bass's Biosphere 2 had ambitions to find out whether man could live on Mars. And in that respect, it failed.

The Texas millionaire Ted Bass put up £100 million, possibly the largest ever private investment in a scientific experiment, to build the biosphere, and paid the multi-million electricity bill for three years before pulling the plug in 1994.

Eight pioneers, or biospherians as they were called, lived in the sealed eco-system growing their own food (a typical menu included bean soup, bean roast, pulses, and banana fritters) and even making banana wine for birthdays.

But the project was beset by problems. Oxygen levels fell to the equivalent of living at 17,000ft. The oxygen depletion was attributed to microbes in the soil, but with 30,000 tons of soil and 30 different types, it was difficult to pinpoint where it was going. While bees and other pollinators could not survive, ants and cockroaches virtually took over. Because the trees grew so fast (20 feet in a year) but had less wind than in their natural habitat, they became weak and taller trees simply toppled over.

Dr David Tilman, a Professor at Minnesota University and on the advisory panel for Biosphere 2, is encouraging, however, about the aims of the *English Eden Project. He says:* "Eden is designed to teach. I hope it incorporates real up-to-date science, not just public opinion."

EMMA MAHONY

Dispatches from the double yellow line

Drivers' letters to avoid parking fines range from the furious to the fictitious

For the average law-abiding Joe, the treatment that is handed out by council parking services can come as something of a shock. Where most shops and public services have had to wake up to notions of customer service and accountability, parking services remain, in many drivers' eyes, a Stalinist redoubt and nests of inefficiency, rudeness and bloodsucking financial penalties.

Drivers guilty of nothing more than being a couple of *minutes* late returning to a meter regularly report being treated as liars and nuisances for daring to question their councils.

Chris Evans, the disc jockey, was recently criticised by traffic wardens and their union for saying on his radio show that a warden who waited by his car morning after morning to ticket it at precisely 8.30am when the restrictions came *into effect* was "devilish" and the "meanest man in Britain".

However, councils deal with thousands of complaints, many of which are from people just chancing it. So what exactly do they have to put up with? In Hackney, east London, one scam was uncovered recently when a man wrote in saying he had included a postal order to pay a parking fine. There was no postal order with his letter. But, undeterred, the man showed that he had a stub, so the council counted the fine as paid. Later, an eagle-eyed *functionary* noticed that someone else had written in, quoting the same stub number. It turned out that a local gang were all using the same stub number and ruse, and they were all ordered to pay their fines.

Less conspiratorial, but showing more imagination, was the Bristol woman who asked for her penalty charge to be quashed, explaining: "I was late getting back to my car as I had to give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to a collapsed traffic warden."

Even less credible are the tacky pleas for sympathy. "I had just received a phone call to say that my grandfather had two hours to live," wrote one man. "On my way to the hospital I stopped to do some banking for my employer and was issued with a ticket." How heartless.

Then there are the schoolboy efforts: "I admit I was parked in a no-parking bay, but so were two other cars."

Another problem for the authorities is late payment. Few excuses for this can match the charm of one sent to a borough in east London: "Thank you for your reminder about the unpaid parking fine. I am so sorry it has taken me a long time to reply, but I have been away on a 'Liberating the Inner Man' residential seminar and Mrs Sniggs, who does for me — and is in many ways a dear treasure in spite of the foul pipe she smokes and her habit of hiding in the loft every time a police car drives past — conceals any post that she thinks will upset me. This causes no end of trouble."

However, sometimes the intransigence and pig-headedness of councils can drive normally sane motorists to insanely determined campaigns for justice. Dr R. Longden wrote to *The Times* telling of an exchange with Islington Council. Last June, Dr Longden paid £1 into a meter in the borough which did not register the money. Since the council was so ready to issue its own penalties, he thought that for a change he would ask it for a refund.

Islington Council refused to acknowledge the meter was faulty — in effect, calling him a liar. Dr Longden, however, refused to give up. Six months and five letters later, on January 17 this year, he received a cheque for £1 from the council. But this is not the end of the matter. Goaded by what he saw as its arrogance, he is determined that the council should have a clear policy about what motorists should do when meters fail to register their money, a failure of the council's contract for which the motorist can be punished.

Lest you think that only motorists have a hard time, Tina Brooks, parking manager with Drake's Group, a private company which handles parking services for several local authorities, points out that the life of a parking attendant is not an easy one.

"Our staff endure verbal and physical abuse on a daily basis. They have been threatened with knives and machetes and even guns," she says. "If they didn't do their job, illegally parked cars would paralyse London."

Ms Brooks claims that her company has a policy of acknowledging 90 per cent of letters within three days and — subject to investigations — all letters within a week. If this encourages you to write to complain about an unreasonable parking services department, there can be few better templates for a letter than this one, recently sent to the south London borough of Lambeth.

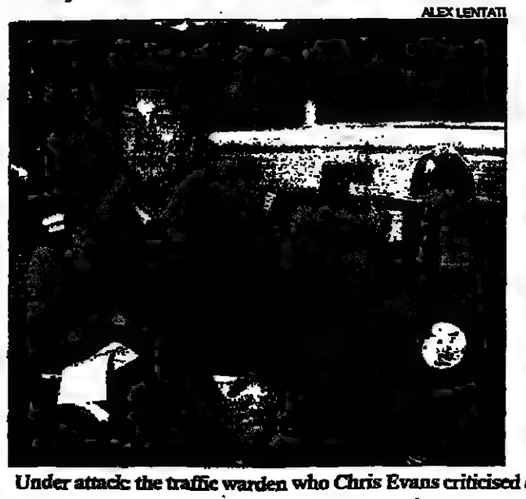
A man's car was repeatedly issued with tickets despite being parked in a resident's bay with the permit on clear display. "Dear Bureaucrat," he wrote. "Thank you for your letter advising me that the fact that I hold and display a resident's parking permit is not sufficient to protect me from your troublesome ineptitude when parking in the residents' parking bays.

"I am charmed", he continued, "that you, and supposedly your parking committee, prefer the word of a pea-brained, wall-eyed git of a parking *attendant to my own.* The permit has been displayed all the time, and is still there for all to see (except, of course, the occasional nerd traffic warden in Camden's employ)."

Perhaps unsurprisingly, he is still awaiting a reply.

PHILIP DELVES BROUGHTON

ALEX LENTATI



Under attack: the traffic warden who Chris Evans criticised on air and called "devilish"

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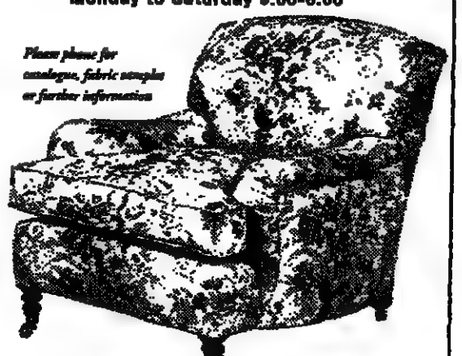

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CHRISTOPHER BARKER

Christine Hamilton (right) tells Kate Hinze about the magic of chocolate: "Just split a bottle of champagne with your man, give him half a dozen oysters, then a light but intense chocolate pudding, and he's all yours"

Confessions of a chocaholic

Christine Hamilton has few weaknesses she'll admit to. Chocolate is one of them, she tells **Michael Cable**

my favourite shop

Christine Hamilton pops another chocolate truffle into her mouth, closes her eyes and *lets out a small* sigh of intense satisfaction. "Battleaxes, of course, don't have any weaknesses," smiles the famously formidable wife of former MP Neil Hamilton and author of *The Bumper Book of British Battleaxes*. "But I do. And it's chocolate." Her fingers hover once again over the tray of free samples on offer at The Chocolate Society.

Started seven years ago by Alan and Nicola Porter to promote "proper" chocolate — as against the sugary, diluted stuff found in the average chocolate bar — the society, based in the Yorkshire Dales, began selling by mail order only.

Just over a year ago, so great was demand — more than 7,500 enthusiasts signed up for lifetime membership — that they decided to open a shop in London. Mrs Hamilton, a self-confessed chocaholic who admits to having secret stashes all *around the house, was on to it like a* flash. "A friend of mine, who was visiting us in Cheshire for the weekend, brought a whole pile of wonderful things from here as a present," she recalls. "I took one look and demanded to know: 'Where is this magic shop?'

"It then turned out to be conveniently located along the route Neil and I used to take almost every day *from our flat in Battersea to the* House of Commons, and which we still use every time we go into central London, so I had every opportunity to pop in." As she moves around the mouthwatering displays, uttering little whimpers of delight, she explains: "My favourite is the really dark chocolate. I like it with nuts. And ginger and chocolate is a fabulous, classic combination.

"I love the little shakers of chocolate pearls that you can hide in your handbag for a quick fix; for *sheer indulgence, their pure* cooking chocolate is wonderful. The joy of that is that you can keep it in the kitchen cupboard and eat the whole packet by the spoonful without anyone being any the wiser!"

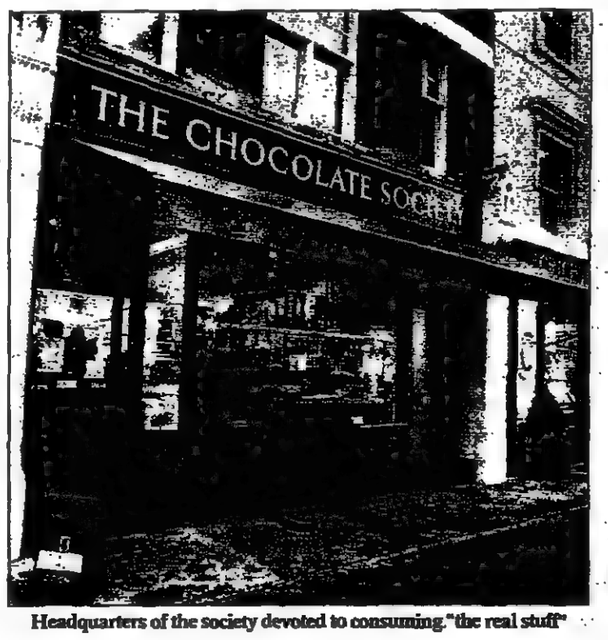
For all those whose secret cravings have reached this guilt-ridden level, the staff at The Chocolate Society can produce comforting facts and figures to prove that good-*quality chocolate — the stuff that* contains up to 70 per cent cocoa solids and very little sugar — is neither fattening nor tooth-rotting. On the contrary, it is actually a very healthy product.

Assistant Kate Hinze compares the various types of "Grand Cru" chocolate — powerful, dark South American Guanaja, tropical Caraibe, rare, almond-flavoured Manjari and creamy Jivara — to fine wine. And, she adds coyly, it is extremely sexy stuff. Casanova apparently rated it above champagne and oysters as an aphrodisiac, and *shop manageress* Tracey Coles's enthusiastic demonstration of how to select and eat a chocolate properly is, in terms of sensuality, somewhere between the Cadbury's Flake ad and the supper scene in *Tom Jones*.

"You are looking for a high gloss to show a good cocoa butter content," she explains. "It should retain a slight fingerprint when touched to indicate the right melting point, it should smell fresh and fruity and, if in the form of a square, it should snap cleanly.

"To eat it, you place it on the tongue so that it melts slowly, gradually covering all the taste buds. No biting, chewing or nibbling."

Mrs Hamilton seems well-versed in chocolate's seductive qualities. "It's wonderful, magical stuff," she says. "If your man is a bit dozy, you should split a bottle of champagne with him, give him half a dozen oysters, then a light but intense chocolate pudding, and away you go! He's all yours."



Headquarters of the society devoted to consuming "the real stuff"

She would visit The Chocolate Society even more regularly were it not for economies necessitated by the double loss of her husband's job as MP for Tatton — defeated by anti-sleaze candidate Martin Bell in the last election, following the cash-for-questions scandal — and hers as his secretary. As she says bitterly: "We had a regular monthly pay cheque which, as Tatton was the fifth safest Tory seat in the country, we had every reason to think was reasonably secure. Then, wham!"

There have been times in private, she admits, when she crumbled. But in public she has maintained an aggressively positive attitude and has been fiercely loyal in defence of her husband — notably at the so-called Battle of Knutsford Heath, where she confronted Mr Bell during an election meeting.

While Neil looks for a new job, the couple have kept themselves afloat partly with the help of fees from media appearances — even brazening it out on *Have I Got News For You* — and with the proceeds from *Battleaxes*. A cookbook is planned as a follow-up.

Mrs Hamilton finds herself in good company — both as a battleaxe ("One of the nicer things I've been called!") and a chocaholic — with Baroness Thatcher.

"She once came to dinner with us and, knowing that she loved chocolate, but that she usually gave it up for Lent, I played it safe by making two puddings: one chocolate and one fruit," she recalls.

"She actually went for the chocolate and when I mentioned that I thought she gave it up for Lent she replied: 'Oh no, only chocolate *bars*!' "

● *The Chocolate Society, 36 Elizabeth Street, London SW1 (0171-259 9222). Open: Mon-Sat 10am-5pm.*

SHOP NEWS

■ KIT yourself out for skiing with **Sam de Teran's** new mail-order catalogue. It features faux fur wraps and hats, goggles, thermals, and has slick signature ski jackets and pants, all in shades of chocolate, sky and white. Call 0171-584 0902 for a catalogue, or call in at 151 Fulham Road, London SW3.

■ LOOK out for super-cool fake-fur cushions, exclusive to **Debenhams**. Zebra, cowhide and leopard designs are a snip at £18 for medium, £35 for large, and are in the shops from next week. Call 0171-408 3536 for your nearest Debenhams store . . . **De la Cuona's** outlet at **General Trading Company** also has glorious new cushions in leather (£78) and butter suede (£92). General Trading Company, 144 Sloane Street, London SW1 (0171-730 0411).

■ UPDATE: **Jerry's Home Stores** (0171-581 0909 for branches) are running their Smart Buys promotion until February 22, with reductions on more than 500 of their regular lines, including the Dualit toaster, down from £159 to £139 . . . The inspirational new 1998 **Laura Ashley** home catalogue is out on February 1 (£3.50). Order a copy on 0800 868100. Or try **Toast's** tempting mail-order catalogue, devoted to simple ranges of pyjamas, from linen and flannel to pin tucks and waffle, in refreshing colours such as lime, hyacinth and indigo; robes in slub silk and chenille; and pure wool blankets. The Monday to Saturday order line is 01558 668800.

JUDITH WILSON

GADGETS

Gerber Multi-Lock

COMPACT multi-tools come in ever-decreasing sizes, but on many jobs they let you down. The Gerber Multi-Lock from Fiskars UK in Bridgend, Mid-Glamorgan, is a 13-in-1 pocket tool kit tougher than granite.

Made from heavy-gauge stainless steel and weighing 225g, it is built around the handles of retractable blunt-nosed pliers, with a mean grip. The handles cradle the various attachments including four types of screwdriver, two blades, wire cutter, file, lanyard ring, wire crimper and can and bottle openers.

TIM WAPSHOTT

● *Gerber Multi-Lock, £59.99, from Fiskars UK (stockists, 01656 654882).*

When the goal is a hot cuppa

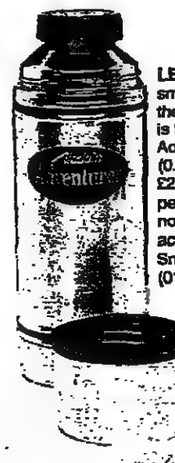
VACUUM FLASKS

Every Saturday it's the same dilemma. Vacuum flask. . . or not? I dither in front of the kettle as the clock ticks. The trouble is, as someone who already takes to football matches a big handbag, a pair of binoculars, extra scarves, a notebook and an electronic pager, I figure I just can't handle a flask of nice hot coffee as well. Try standing up and yelling "handball!" while nursing that lot on your lap. Besides, it's nerdish to have a flask, surely. It says you are a sad sack whose mum knits your gloves.

Which is why half-times are sometimes rather miserable. Half a dozen surrounding sad sacks will produce a battered old flask (nothing like this lot) from under the seat. They will then proceed to stand and drink all the nice hot coffee without offering a drop to anyone else.

"You've got two cups in that flask, did you know?" is what I'm often tempted to ask, numb with cold, as they hold the coffee to their chins and the steam goes up their noses. But people with flasks are trained to avoid eye contact. Staring fixedly into the middle distance, they drink the lot by themselves, no problem.

LYNNE TRUSS

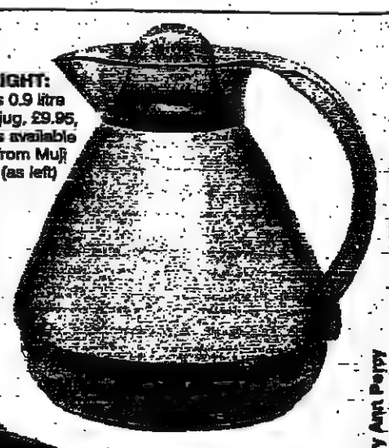


LEFT: A cheaper, smaller version of the TuffBoy (right) is the Aladdin Adventurer flask (0.47 litre). At £21.99, it is perfect for the no-fuss, no-frills action-man. From Snow & Rock (0171-937 0872)

RIGHT: "Fred Worm" flask by Alessi (0.7 litre) is easy to hold and easy on the eye, £32, from American Retro (0171-734 3477)

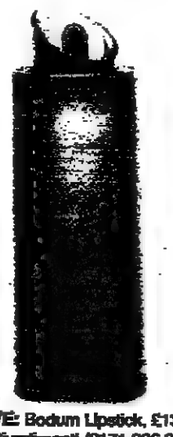
LEFT: The unbreakable, stainless steel TuffBoy (ref SKM10/1.0 litre), £52.95, from Harrods (as below) comes with an adjustable shoulder strap. Best for hunting, shooting, fishing types

LEFT: Bodum's 0.9 litre opaque jug £9.95 is available from Muji (0171-323 2208)



RIGHT: Bodum's 0.9 litre opaque jug, £9.95, is available from Muji (as left)

ABOVE: Looking akin to a plump robin redbreast, this cherry red Colombus flask holds 0.9 litres and is £29.95 at Harrods (0171-730 1234)



ABOVE: Bodum Lipstick, £13.25, from Divertimenti (0171-386 9911) has a funnel, which makes for easy pouring

LEFT: A woven grass casing surrounds this flask by Tohu Bohu, £44.95. With a whopping 2.25 litre capacity, it's more for a family car trip than a hike. Available from Graham & Greene (0171-727 4594)

ABOVE: For spring brunch in the garden, the Alfi conical flask, £36.95 (0.9 litre), is a stylish way to keep the coffee piping hot. From Aero (0171-221 1950)

ABOVE: Used mainly for catering, the Ella Airpot (ref BDB1900S) holds 1.9 litres and keeps its contents warm or cold for up to 20 hours (stockists, 0181-998 2100)

Photographs by Dee Jenson Research by Mary Ann Perry

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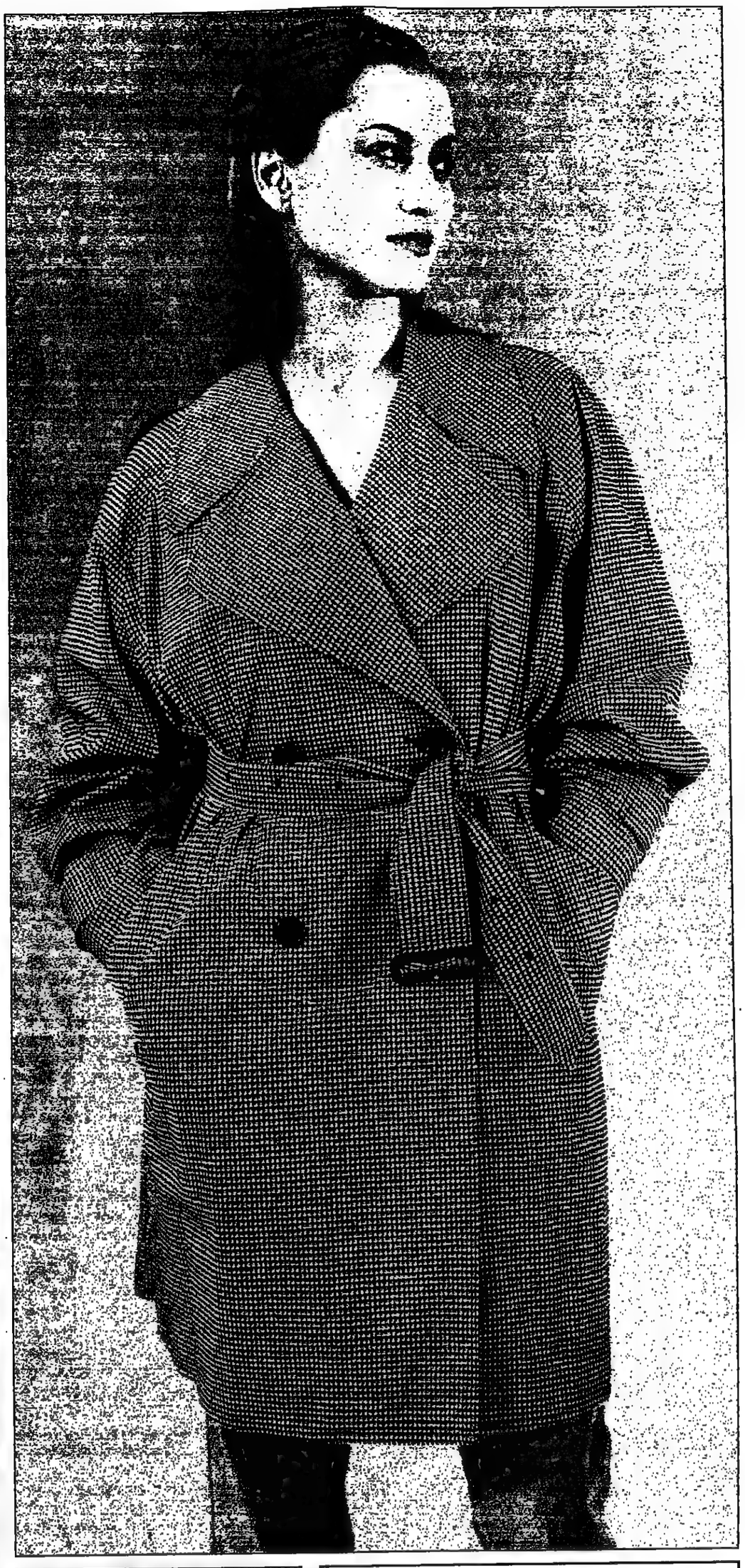
Bring on the raining champion



ABOVE: Stone raincoat, £225, Whistles, 27 Sloane Square, SW1 (0171-730 9819). Pale blue crop sweater, £29.90, selected Benetton branches nationwide. Beige trousers, £35, Warehouse, branches nationwide (0171-278 3491). Black leather pointed ankle boots, £155, Russell & Bromley, branches nationwide (0171-629 6903)

ABOVE RIGHT: White ankle-length raincoat, £344, Armani Jeans, Emporio Armani, 191 Brompton Road, SW3 (0171-823 8818). Trousers and boots, as before

MAIN PICTURE: Fine black and white dogtooth-check double-breasted raincoat, to order, Burberrys, 165 Regent Street, W1 (0171-734 5929). Trousers, as before

RIGHT: Two-tone silver raincoat, £225, Agnès B, 111 Fulham Road, SW3 (0171-225 3477). Trousers and boots, as before

FAR RIGHT: Cream belted raincoat, £120, Kookaï, selected branches nationwide (0171-937 4411). Navy cable-neck sweater, £55, Benetton, as before. Trousers, as before

Hair and make-up by **Sally Kvalheim** for Jo Hansford (0171-495 7774). Styling by **Amandip Uppal**. Model: **Eva**

Britain and rain, unfortunately, have a relationship as close as thunder and lightning. You can't think of the first without anxiously considering the second — and you never seem to be prepared when the latter actually comes.

If it poured down, wet-weather gear would be simple — all you'd need would be oilskins, wellies, a brolly and a self-satisfied smile. Instead, as soon as you have togged up, out comes the sun and you are left high, dry and steaming. Damp under the collar, rather than on top of it.

The answer was provided by the man whose name has become synonymous with Britain. Mr E. Mackintosh not only made use of a newly patented rubberised cloth in 1904, but created a coat which has become an English classic that has remained stylish, while still being functional.

As with most classics, the raincoat was never designed as a fashion item. However, the traditional style has become popular with thousands of tourists visiting Britain every year.

"The Japanese are so keen on our raincoats that we now do petite ranges specifically for them," says Emma Clarke at Aquascutum. Although the label is best known for its classics, such as the Filey coat, bought last weekend by rock star Paul Weller, it is becoming more contemporary, and now even stocks a trendy *Avengers*-style coat (£225), complete with matching Seventies Carnaby cap.

Although most adult Britons have traditionally opted for classic styles from outfitters such as Burberrys (which produces about 8,000 raincoats a week), or brightly coloured plastic Christopher Robin-style rain outfits with matching Wellington boots for children, the range of rainwear today means we are now more discriminating.

Traditional trenchcoats are being replaced by Barbour or Australian Driza-Bone jackets because they are more hard-wearing and totally weatherproof. In cities, light, foldable and creaseproof microfibre coats are taking the place of the old-fashioned gabardine model or even less glamorous Pakamac, which sold up to 50,000 a week in the 1950s. Rather than little plastic foldaways, macs now come in fashionable cuts which mirror the looks on the catwalks. There are single or double-breasted models, with hidden buttons, narrow sleeves and clean tailoring.

Louise Grunberg of Feminella, which has created about 18 different macs for this spring, says there are two styles of rainwear this year. "There is the soft, fluid, romantic style and the hooded, sporty look, which is more sculpted and minimalistic." As well as using traditional polyester, nylon and polyurethane, the company has developed a soft waterproof suedette, which allows the wearer's skin to breathe.

Since 1856, when Thomas Burberry developed the trenchcoat to replace the rubber-lined mackintosh, it has been possible to buy coats which are waterproof as well as aerated. Burberrys still uses a mix of wool and cotton for its coats, which protected troops in the First World War; Barbour uses Egyptian cotton proofed in Britain; and Paul Smith utilises waxed cotton for his lightweight Epsom coats.

For those who want to break with tradition, the high street offers high fashion options in a range of colours. Paul Smith has pastels as well as a shiny red version; Agnès B a long silver coat; Jigsaw two three-quarter-length flat-fronted versions, in green/grey and black; Kookaï an off-white full-length coat, most for around £100.

It is possible to find a real trench coat if you want one — complete with storm collar, gun flap, epaulettes, saddle flaps, D-rings and hanging space for that essential trench accessory, the grenade. But for the modern woman, there are now several softer options made in high-tech fabrics which don't crease, feel soft, keep you dry — and, most importantly, look clean and cool.

LISA GRAINGER

THREE OF A KIND

If you want to keep dry from top to bottom, but refuse to consider a rainhat, the solution is a stylish beret. *LG*

ABOVE: Deep red velvet satin-trim beret, £27.50, The Scotchouse, 2 Brompton Road, SW1 (0171-581 2151)

ABOVE RIGHT: Grey logo beret, £6.95, Kangol, John Lewis, branches nationwide (0171-487 4888)

RIGHT: Black and grey patterned knitted beret, £24.35, The Hat Shop (mail order, 0171-247 1120)

Photographs by **Anna Stevenson**

هكذا من الإصل

GILL ALLEN

Rohan Daft (foreground) joins Steve Colclough, Chris Conroy and Jon Allen in walking a small-mesh net into the Thames at Greenwich in the hope of catching a shoal of whitebait

Whitebait time at Greenwich

Rohan Daft nets and cooks probably the first Thames whitebait for 120 years

Let's hope the following news doesn't result in an armada of tiddler-trawling Spanish fishermen steaming up the Thames: commercially viable quantities of whitebait have returned to the Greenwich Reach.

The river might look as impenetrably brown as it always has, but, according to the Environment Agency, whose job it is to monitor such things, the Thames, which was declared "biologically dead" in the late 1950s, is now the cleanest metropolitan river in Europe. And it is once again stuffed to the gills with all sorts of safely edible fish, such as Dover sole, flounder and, not least, the famous old Greenwich whitebait.

These tiny fish were caught in the area in the 18th and 19th centuries, an age when there were few more fashionable culinary repasts than taking a whitebait dinner in Greenwich. In those days, Gladstone, Disraeli, Lord Derby and other hungry grandees commandeered barges to take them to feast on the fish at numerous riverside taverns.

Those were high old times, which, says Steve Colclough, the Environment Agency's Thames area fisheries officer, came to a somewhat sticky and wholly understandable end in the 1870s. "Commercial fishing for whitebait was petering out in the 1860s," he says. "But it really finished in 1875 when the WC was invented, which resulted in mass pollution."

Another visitor to Greenwich in its whitebait heyday — possibly while researching his *Grand Dictionnaire de Cuisine* of 1873 — was Alexandre Dumas. Whitebait, he recorded, was "certainly one of the most popular dishes in London".

Dumas continued: "I recall being invited by a friend to eat whitebait at Greenwich — without any other excuse or occasion but just to eat whitebait. The fish were washed by the handful in ice water, drained on a cloth, and set over ice for 20 minutes. Just before serving, they were rolled in white breadcrumbs, put into a napkin with a handful of flour, shaken, and poured in a sieve so fine that only the extra flour could get through it. The sieve was shaken and then plunged with the fish into very hot fat. A minute was sufficient to cook them. When they turned golden they were removed from the sieve, sprinkled with salt and a little cayenne, arranged on a folded napkin, and served immediately."

The above method is the classic way of preparing whitebait. And, save for the breadcrumbs, it was about the same way in which I cooked my own Greenwich-caught whitebait last Monday — in all probability the first Thames whitebait to have been netted for the table in about 120 years.

Late January traditionally signalled the start of the whitebait season. So, from Greenwich beach, which is shingle and stone, about 40m long, and slap-bang in front of the disused Royal Naval College, Mr Colclough, his assistants Chris Conroy and Jon Allen, and myself set about walking a 35m-long and 4m-deep fine-meshed net out about 10m into the river. That done, the net was then walked either up or downstream for another 15m or so before being brought back, loop-like, to the shore, where it was pulled in.

I should make it clear that this is an exercise Mr Colclough often uses to monitor life in the Thames. He is not a commercial whitebait fisherman and doesn't want to encourage anyone to take it up. Well, not just yet. "We really don't want people trawling for whitebait," he says. "Small-mesh nets pull in all sorts of small fish and damage other stocks."

To my great surprise, our first trawl netted an important catch. Undistinguished-looking, silver, and a paltry 1½in long, the appearance of the fish belied its impressive provenance. "Sand smelt," Mr Colclough said. To you and I, whitebait.

"Until the turn of the century people thought that whitebait were a separate species of fish," Mr Colclough says. "But then scientists discovered that they were a number of distinct species. These days, a shoal of whitebait might typically be 80 per cent sprat and 20 per cent herring. Sand smelt appear in whitebait shoals, too."

We trawled again, hoping that we might come across a shoal; enough to make a proper meal. Mr Colclough had come across shoals before. "One contained about 4,000 fish," he said. "Whitebait shoals of that size are not unusual down river at Gravesend."

Alas, we didn't find a shoal at Greenwich. Our three trawls that day netted two more whitebait, one tiny roach, two tiny bream, two incredibly tiny thin-lipped grey mullet, and a couple of hundred shrimp. Not the best day's whitebait fishing, but evidence enough of the newly found health of the Thames.

The fish were measured, logged and then put back. All of them, that is, except the whitebait. They were swiftly transported, just as they would have been 150 years ago, to the Trafalgar Tavern beside the beach.

End of the line: whitebait caught and crisply fried in Greenwich

The Trafalgar is where Gladstone and his friends repaired for their whitebait. These days its whitebait arrives frozen from Holland, but the pub still serves up to 100 portions every day.

There, I prepared my rather pathetic-looking yet historically significant catch in much the classic way. Then came the big moment: a taste of real Greenwich whitebait.

They were crisp, had the springy sort of crunch you might expect from a whole (head and eyes) fried fish, they tasted extremely fresh. And, well, fishy — which, because I was expecting at least a suggestion of mud, was very pleasant indeed.

● *Trafalgar Tavern, Park Row, Greenwich, London SE10 (0181-858 2437).*

Drink

Jane MacQuitty

Three premier-league white grapes – and the wines that become richer and fuller as they grow older

WINE COURSE PART 3

Riesling, chenin blanc and semillon are the premier-league white grapes. Like the champion, chardonnay, their main claim to fame is the ability to grow old gracefully, with a distinctive style that becomes richer, fuller and more complex with age. Sauvignon blanc falls into the lower first-division category, because its gooseberry-green style does not improve with time.

Riesling, though an unfashionable grape, is head of the premier-league trio. This is the grape that can deliver a first-class performance wherever it is grown. What you get with good, young premier league riesling is a mouth-wateringly racy acidity and an intense floral, lime or peach-scented finesse. Try the New Zealand Lone Tree Marlborough Riesling (Sainsbury's, £4.99).

Given even a few years of cellaring, rieslings turn into a sublimely rich, petrol-ly mouthful. Newcomers to riesling worry about this flavour and wonder how fuel and wine could possibly be related. But anyone tasting the heady, floral and petrol-ly 1996 Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Kabinett from the von Kesselstatt's Mosel estate will know just how dreamy this fine wine can be (Oddbins, £6.99).

The riesling grape's greatest drawback is that its homeland is liebfraumilch-tainted Germany, and this, coupled with the numerous *ersatz* rieslings the world produces, has given the grape a bad name. Silly, misplaced sweet-wine snobbery has again worked against the grape, because the world's top rieslings all benefit from an off-dry style, ensuring their intense, zingy, floral fruit shines. I defy anyone to dislike the superb late-harvest off-dry finesse of Kesselstatt's 1995 Scharzhofberger Riesling Spätlese, full of waxy, tongue-tingling spice that makes a comforting aperitif (at Sainsbury's from March, £7.99).

Chenin blanc grapes aquire their world-class peach, green-apple and wax-scented flavours in only one place — the Loire valley, where its style can be either dry, off-dry, sparkling or sweet.

Magnificent old, sweet, noble-rot-affected chenin blancs from the Loire display glorious buttercup colours and astonishingly intense honeyed, waxy flavours partly because of the shrivelled, concentrated late-harvest grapes they have been made from and which appear to last for ever. I have tasted 50-year-old Côteaux du Layon that, because of the high natural acidity in the chenin blanc grapes it was made from, was still fresh as a daisy.

A ridiculously cheap imitator of this style, with a little of the seductive, waxy and, in this case, almondy elegance of Loire chenin is that displayed by the 1995 Domaine du Plessis Moelleux, or sweet Faye d'Anjou Loire half-bottle from the Côteaux du Layon appellation (Victoria Wine Cellars, £4.99).

Drier Loire chenin blancs, unless they are from super-ripe years such as 1995 and 1996, can disappoint. So tuck in while you can to the glorious baked-apple-rich 1996 Vouvray Demi-Sec (Safeway, £3.99), which does not appear overly sweet and would make a good all-purpose winter white.

The best value that the New World can produce in this department comes from South Africa, where the chenin blanc accounts for a third of the grapes planted there.

The peachy citric fruit of the Cape's 1997 Namaqua Chenin Blanc from the Vredendal co-operative in the Olifants river region, represents South Africa well and is a good, satisfying and cheap winter glugger (Oddbins, £2.99).

Semillon is slightly in front of chenin blanc in the premier-league grapes trio. This is because it is the principal grape — blended with about 20 per cent sauvignon blanc — behind the world's greatest sweet wine, sauternes.

The semillon also has a successful New World persona of its own: Hunter valley semillon, known there, confusingly, as Hunter valley riesling.

This indigenous Australian white wine style begins life just as the dry white semillons of the Graves region of Bordeaux do — as a thin, ordinary, vaguely lemony white. It is only with age that it turns into a rich, toasty golden wine. Try a Barossa Valley imitator, the splendid 1996 Penfolds Old Vine Semillon (Victoria Wine, £6.99).

If it's a first-class premier-league sauternes you are after to accompany spotted dick or treacle tart, try the lemon and nut-laden 1990 Domaine de la Fôret Crème de Tête Sauternes (Waitrose, £16.95).

Next week: Premier reds.

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CHANGING TIMES

THE DRINKS THAT TIME FORGOT

Worthington White Shield

BOTTLED BEERS — with all the Trappist trappings, and from Brussels to Timbuktu — are increasingly fashionable in the gentrified pubs. Not so for many of our home-grown old peculiars, however. Worthington White Shield is to be "rationalised": brewery-speak for "quietly killed off".

There will be those who rejoice at this demise, however. For every poor barman who ever had to serve this anachronistic ale, its most tiresome characteristic was the retention of those parts of the brewing process other beers have had filtered out.

Keeping part of the sediment in the bottle is said to deliver a richer, smoother taste, as well as being more acceptable to the eye, but only as long as it's not sloshed into the glass.

White Shield had, therefore, to be poured very slowly. This was the irritation test of the rookie barman, who would invariably fail and have to watch in humiliation as the customer poured it himself.

Surely something so ancient and untampered with deserves a new lease of life. The student market, à la Newcastle Brown, perhaps? No, there is about as much chance of a comeback as there is of shove-ha'penny bets replacing the lottery in the nation's hearts. May it rest in pieces.

KATE STRONACH

HENRY HARRIS'S CHEAT OF THE WEEK

The near-parfait starter

HOW MANY times have you eaten a slice of the most delicious foie gras and chicken liver in a restaurant and thought that you would never be able to make it at home?

Today's offering is more a variation on a theme, yet respects the original. It is not so much cheating in the kitchen but more a case of having confidence in your ingredients. This "cheat" shows you how to get a flash starter on the table in the time it takes to make a few croûtons and then get changed for dinner.

Almost chicken liver parfait
Serves six

- 1 part-baked baguette (frozen)
- Olive oil
- 250g unsalted butter
- 2tbsp finely chopped shallots
- 500g fresh chicken livers
- Salt and pepper
- A splash of port, madeira or cognac
- 1 bunch of rocket leaves
- 4tbsp walnut oil (optional)

Preheat the oven to 200C. Slice 18 rounds off the baguette, brush them with olive oil and place on a baking sheet in the oven. Cook for 8-10min on each side or until golden brown. Set to one side.

Meanwhile, melt all the butter in a wide pan (yes, all of it), add the shallots and simmer for 5min. Then add the livers along with seasoning and fry gently for another 5min. Throw in whichever type of booze you've chosen and cook for a further 1min. Tip the contents of the pan into a food processor and blitz until smooth. Adjust the seasoning and pour the somewhat sloppy mixture into a shallow tray. Place this tray in the freezer or ice compartment to cool and set (about 20min).

To serve: place three croûtons in the middle of each plate. Dip a dessert spoon in a pot of hot water to warm it and then drag it across the surface of the chicken liver mixture so that generous curls lift off the surface. Place these on top of the croûtons. Repeat this process until all of the croûtons are covered.

Finally, scatter the rocket over the top of each plate and drizzle over the walnut oil. Put on the table immediately and serve with a glass of lightly chilled ten-year-old tawny port (I suggest you check your port stock before starting on the dish).

● *The author is chef at Harvey Nichols' Fifth Floor Restaurant in Knightsbridge, London.*

STAR BUYS

1996 Bourgogne Hautes-Côtes de Beaune (white), Georges Desire, Somerfield and Gateway, down £2.50 to £4.49 until Tuesday.

THE WHITE 1996 burgundy vintage is deemed by some to be as celestial as the great 1995 whites. This explains why this humble bottle from a lowly Côtes de Beaune appellation is full of enticing lemony, steely style, with a fine, milky finish. If you are looking for a decent white burgundy for less than a fiver, this is it.

1996 Bourgogne Hautes-Côtes de Beaune (red), Georges Desire, Somerfield and Gateway, down £2.50 to £4.49 until Tuesday.

THE BOURGOGNE rouge partner to the blanc, left. This plum-and-pickled-cherry-stashed bottle, with a touch of creosote and tar on the nose from the charred oak barrels in which the wine was aged, makes an enjoyable, good-value January buy. The wine is best served with food, especially game casseroles.

BEST OF THE REST:

● The Co-op's cut-price campaign continues until Feb 1 with £1 off Martin Shaw's classy 1996 Alasia Chardonnay from Italy's top Piemonte region (£3.99); a handy 50p off its floral 1997 Argentine Sauvignon-Torrontes (£2.99) blend from Peter Bright; plus a hearty Spanish red, the 1994 Marques de Monistrol Merlot, down £1.50 to £2.99. Finished the Yuletide port? Try the rich, plummy Warre's Warrior, a snip at £6.25, down from £8.25.

The Times Cook

Books, friends and restaurants are great for finding new recipes, but for the ultimate inspiration, try an art gallery

Frances Bissell

The National Gallery in London was clever enough to persuade the food historian Gillian Riley to write a book called *A Feast for the Eyes*. In it, she takes us through the gallery, pausing before her favourite paintings and telling their story, with richly detailed emphasis on the table.

I must confess that on those few occasions when I visit art galleries and museums, my attention is always held longest by the paintings depicting food, whether still life or a lively meal-time scene of the family and its domestic surroundings. These paintings are so detailed and intense, and painted with such passion and intimate knowledge, that there is no sense that food is a frivolous subject for a painting. It is as fundamental to the human condition as religion, war, love, death and allegory, and thus is a fit subject to represent.

And I always find myself wondering what was about to be cooked. At the Prado gallery in Madrid there is a painting of *Sea Bream and Oranges* by Luis Melendez. We see a frying pan, some garlic, a brass pestle and mortar, a can of olive oil and an earthenware bowl that might contain ground almonds or breadcrumbs. The fillets of seabream, dipped in ground almonds, fried in olive oil and served with an orange and garlic vinaigrette, is what I am inspired to cook.

Knobbly cucumbers, rounded ripe tomatoes, an earthenware bowl, a metal flask of oil, an earthenware flask (which surely contains vinegar) and a pot of salt are the subjects of yet another Melendez; the beginnings of a gazpacho, without a doubt.

What is so striking, too, and particularly evident in his *Still Life with Ham, Cheese and Vegetables* is that these are food scenes which one comes across time and time again in today's Spanish kitchen. Here, there is a generous wedge of manchego cheese in waxed paper, the same ripe tomatoes, silver-skinned onions, and a plate of figs behind a big bowl containing a quarter of serrano ham with a horn-handled knife. The ham looks so delicious and well-marbled that it is probably the ham from the acorn-fed black Iberian pig. And the bread, with its deeply cleft and uniformly pale golden, smooth crust is the bread you can still buy in Spain today.

In the National Gallery of Scotland, Velázquez's *Old Woman Cooking Eggs* is almost certainly making Castilian garlic soup, and Juan Battista Romeros's *Still Life with Bread, Wine and Figs* shows a table laid by someone who has clearly just been to the local convent to buy the sweet, eggy desserts made by the nuns.

Although I like the Spanish paintings best, some of the early 17th-century Dutch and Flemish painters were clearly fascinated by food. Pieter Claesz has a wonderful still life depicting, I should guess, the end of the meal, with nuts, citrus fruit, pastries and a pie — cut and spilling out dark, fried fruit — orange slices and, who knows, meat and spices. It reminds me of a large mince pie.

Another Melendez painting in the Prado shows a serene and atmospheric kitchen scene. A tall earthenware jug is covered with a twisted sheet of parchment, and there is a profusion of apples, pears, walnuts, hazelnuts and flat, wooden sweetmeat boxes. Someone is about to make fruit pastes. Quince is usually used, and there are still some around in the shops, but you can also make the paste with apples or pears, and why not add walnuts for extra texture, as I have done in today's dessert recipe, which follows a selection inspired by my favourite paintings.

A Spanish snack

Not so much a recipe, this is more a suggestion of food with a Spanish flavour to accompany some bottles of chilled fino and dry oloroso

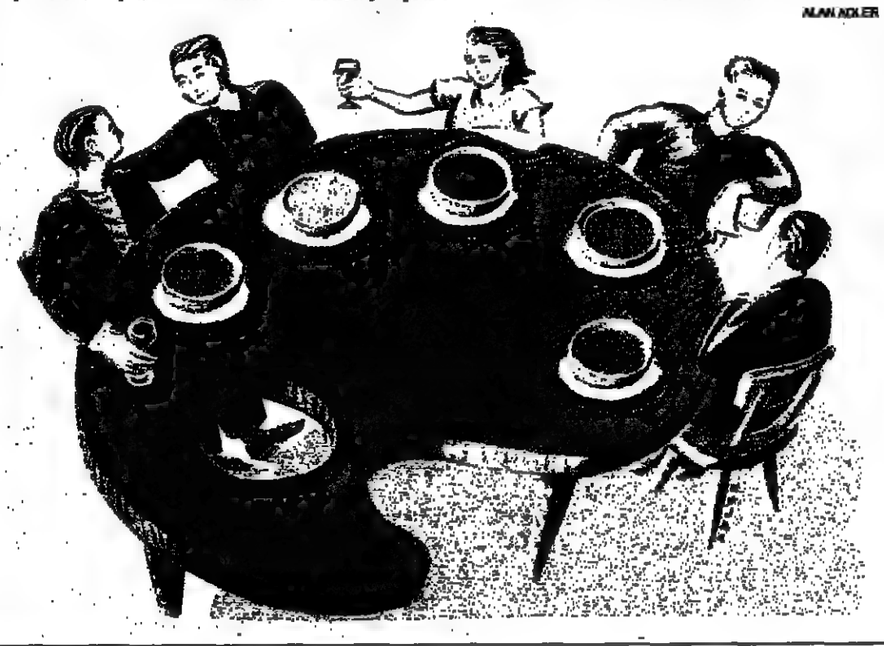
sherry. More and more places now stock good Spanish cheeses, and manchego is the one to look for. Firm, sweet and nutty, it is very good shaved in thin slices.

The best Spanish ham is the *jamón de cerdo Iberico*, especially from the village of Jabugo in the Sierra de Aracena, not far from Huelva in Andalucia. At 600 metres above sea level, the air is of exactly the right quality — clean, mild and not too dry — to ensure perfect curing of this delectable ham. As with all good food, as little as possible is done to it.

The Iberian pig is a distinctive breed, with black hide and feet, which explains its other name, *pata negra*. Ranging freely in the cork oak forests, it feeds on acorns and other vegetation, including herbs. After slaughter, the hams are cured with sea salt, then washed down and hung in airy cellars to dry and mature for almost three years, acquiring in the process a unique, sweet tenderness, quite unlike any flavour to be found in other cured hams. The meat is well marbled with the sweet fat, and it is that clue which makes me think of Jabugo ham whenever I see the painting.

We can at last buy this ham in Britain (ring the importers, Grivan, for details of stockists on 0181-692 6993). If you buy the ham in a whole piece, slice it as thinly as possible with a sharp knife.

With the cheese and ham, serve crusty bread, ripe black olives, sweet cherry tomatoes, mild onions and some fruit in the form of figs, melons, muscat grapes or apples, or good quality dried fruit and nuts, if you prefer.



ALAN ADLER

Garlic soup
Serves 4

- 4 soup-spoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 litre light stock (meat or vegetable)
- 4 free-range eggs
- Garlic cloves to taste, peeled and crushed
- 4 slices day-old crusty bread, cut into chunks
- 50g cured ham, shredded (optional)

Spoon the oil into four oven-proof soup bowls and place them in a hot oven. Bring the stock to the boil. Remove the bowls from the oven, slide a raw egg into each, add the garlic, chunks of bread and ham if using it, and pour on boiling stock. Return the bowls to the oven for 2-3min more. Serve very hot.

THE NEXT recipe is simple and can be applied to most fish fillets, and is especially good when Seville oranges are available.

Sea bream with oranges
Serves 2

- 1 or 2 oranges, sweet or Seville
- 1 sea bream, scaled and filleted (make stock from the bones)
- Salt and pepper
- 100g ground almonds
- 75ml extra virgin olive oil
- 1tbsp chervil, parsley or herb fennel, chopped

Grate the orange zest and rub it over the fish fillets. Season lightly. Dip the fillets in the ground almonds and press into the flesh. Heat half the oil in a frying pan and fry the fillets, skin side first. Turn the fish quickly — long enough for it to colour the uncooked surface. Arrange the fish on a platter, skin side up; the skin should be a crisp, golden brown. Mix the remaining oil with freshly squeezed orange juice, heat it in the pan and pour around the fish fillets. Garnish with herbs and, perhaps, a twist of orange zest.

The perfect accompaniment: small whole potatoes, boiled and mixed with finely chopped shallots, chives or spring onions.

THE FOLLOWING dessert is time-consuming to make but worth it, because it keeps well and makes a lovely present. It is economical in that it uses the pulp left over after making fruit jelly. Quince or apple alone can be used and, just as the two fruits combine well in pies, so they do in this paste, which, when set, is cut up to make individual sweetmeats. If quinces are not available, use pears and apples.

Quince and apple paste

- 1kg cooked, well drained and sieved fruit pulp
- 1kg golden granulated sugar
- 200g freshly shelled and chopped walnuts

Put pulp and sugar in a large saucepan, and heat gently until the sugar has dissolved. Raise the heat, and boil the mixture steadily until it thickens. Stir frequently to stop the mixture sticking. Cooking time is 30-40min at least; it is important not to rush it by using too high a heat, which will burn the mixture. Stir in the walnuts. Oil a shallow tray. Pour in jelly and leave until cold. Cut into batons or lozenges and roll in caster sugar. Store in an airtight tin between layers of greaseproof paper. Add a few bay leaves for their scent.

© Frances Bissell

Next week: Dishes for the Chinese New Year.

THE PERFECT SPONGE

Mastering the lightness

■ THE Victoria sponge is so versatile that you may never need another cake recipe. Change it to a coffee cake or a chocolate cake from the same basic recipe.

■ YOU WILL NEED: 175g unsalted butter at room temperature, 175g caster sugar, 3 large free-range eggs and 175g self-raising flour, sifted.

■ METHOD: cream the butter and sugar until pale, light and fluffy. Beat the eggs, and gradually beat into the creamed mixture. Then gently fold in the flour. Spoon the batter into two 20cm greased and floured sandwich tins, smooth the top, and bake in a preheated oven at 180C, gas mark 4, for 20-25min. Allow to cool in the tin for a few minutes, and then ease the sponges out on to the wire racks to cool. To serve, sandwich with raspberry jam and whipped cream or with lemon curd. Sift icing sugar over the top.

■ ALTERNATIVELY, for a chocolate cake, substitute 25-40g flour for 25-40g cocoa, and use a filling of melted chocolate folded into whipped cream. For a coffee cake, add to the original mixture 2tbsp of liquid espresso coffee, and use more coffee to flavour the butter cream, a mixture of softened unsalted butter and icing sugar. Chopped walnuts can be added to the coffee cake batter.

Next week: Perfect rice.

CONSUMING INTERESTS: THE BLT SANDWICH

THE BLT (bacon, lettuce and tomato) is a best-seller on the sandwich stands, despite suggestions that the initials really stand for British, Lousy and Tasteless. The high-street and supermarket versions conventionally come in rather pappy malted brown bread, smeared with a spread which is sometimes butter. This is filled with thin, and too often rubbery, slices of streaky bacon, shreds of iceberg lettuce and three to five thin slices of tomato, melded together with globs of mayonnaise. It is not a pleasant thing to dissect and analyse, and most of the ingredients listed (replete with chemical additives) could give cause to pause for thought before eating. ROBIN YOUNG

BLTs ready for the taste test: will they turn out to be "British, Lousy and Tasteless"?

TESCO Bacon, Lettuce and Tomato, *£1.55*
Claims: "Bacon, tomato and lettuce with mayonnaise in malted brown bread." 31.7g fat per pack.
Verdict: generous filling of crinkly streaky bacon. Adequate layers of salads (more tomato than usual). Predominantly salty flavour. Uses butter as spread. ★★

SAINSBURY's Bacon, Lettuce and Tomato with Mayonnaise, *£1.55*
Claims: "Malted brown bread sandwiches." 30.8g fat per pack.
Verdict: evenly arranged salad, though the lettuce was rather heavily flattened against the bread. Squiggles of crudely smoke-flavoured streaky bacon dominated. Uses butter as spread. ★★

SAFEWAY Bacon, Lettuce and Tomato with reduced calorie mayonnaise, *£1.55*
Claims: "Healthy choice. Reduced fat — contains 40 per cent less fat than Safeway standard BLT sandwich." 12.2g fat per pack.
Verdict: ingredients list reads like a chemistry lesson. High proportion of chewy bacon (strongly smoked), with two shreds of lettuce and three slivers of tomato. Low-fat spread, brown bread. Lower fat content welcome. ★★

HARRODS B.L.T. Bacon, Lettuce, Tomato and Mayo, *£1.99*
Claims: "On malted grain bread." 25.5g fat per pack.
Verdict: uses dairy spread. Curls of semi-crisp streaky bacon. Scant mayonnaise, and lettuce short in one half of the sandwich. Not noticeably better than those at 40p to 50p cheaper. ★★

ASDA Bakery Bacon Lettuce and Tomato, *£1.19*
Claims: "With a rich mayonnaise in malted brown bread." 27.9g of fat per pack.
Verdict: contents list suggests there should be more tomato than bacon; not so. Butter as spread. Bacon lightly cooked, rather stretchy. Mayonnaise not noticeably richer than others. Good value as one of the cheapest on trial. ★★

SOMERFIELD Reduced Fat Bacon, Lettuce and Tomato with Mayonnaise in Malted Brown Bread, *£1.45*
Claims: "25 per cent less fat." 14.4g fat per pack.
Verdict: almost all the lettuce was in one half of the sandwich, and most of the tomato in the other. Bacon (streaky) less flavoursome than Safeway product, but saltier. Uses low-fat spread. Bread was soft and pappy — might just as well eat bubble-wrap. ★★

HARVEY NICHOLS Bacon, Lettuce and Tomato, *£2.25*
Claims: None on the packaging. Came from a deli counter, not pre-packed.
Verdict: a superfilled (difficult to hold together) sandwich in a crusty Italian style (Pugliese) white bread, with spread (probably butter), mayonnaise, salad including radicchio, good amounts of lettuce and tomato and lots of bacon. Noticeably seasoned with ground black pepper and salt to make it much tangier than average. ★★★

PRET à MANGER BLT, *£1.70*
Claims: Handmade natural food avoiding obscure chemical nasties.
Verdict: well filled, with copious mayonnaise, but slender tomato slices. Bacon more thoroughly cooked than most, with caramelisation and crispness. ★★★★

MORE FOOD & DRINK IN THE the times magazine

Gourmet on the wild side

Johnny Acton on the boy who would grow up to eat anything

HOME COOKING

CHANNEL 4

Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, whose television CV has included the provocative delights of eating squirrel

The culinary unconscious of a man whose television cookery CV includes the preparation and consumption of a squirrel, and whose Channel 4 series *TV Dinners* is about to promote the delights of pâté made from human placenta, promises to be a strange and wonderful place.

Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall is the kind of man who, one imagines, tended to eat worms, slugs and sundry other invertebrates when he was young. But according to his father, Rob, this couldn't be further from the truth: "He was much more an early gourmet than anything else."

The signs of this dimension of the infant Fearnley-Whittingstall's character were quick to manifest themselves. At the age of seven or eight, he made the unusual request for a sugar thermometer for Christmas, with which to hone his fudge and peppermint-cream-making skills.

About the same time he displayed an ease with restaurant mores well ahead of his years. When taken out by a cousin for a pre-pantomime meal in Oxford and asked what he wanted to eat, the young Hugh knew exactly what he wanted: "Dover sole and chips, please, George," he replied with confidence.

The origins of his quirkier eating habits are less easy to trace. His mother, Jane, a garden designer and writer, recalls his first experiment with wild food — an interest that would later blossom into the series *Cook on the Wild Side*. "He and a friend tried to poison one of the little girls in his playgroup with berries they found in Ladbroke Square Gardens," she says.

Fearnley-Whittingstall's childhood diet at home was remarkably unremarkable for a youngster growing up in the late 1960s, early 1970s, despite his mother's observation that, "we've always been keen on food". Beefburgers, fish fingers and chips swimming in ketchup all figured large, and his mother confesses that she and her husband continued to subsist on fish fingers until recently.

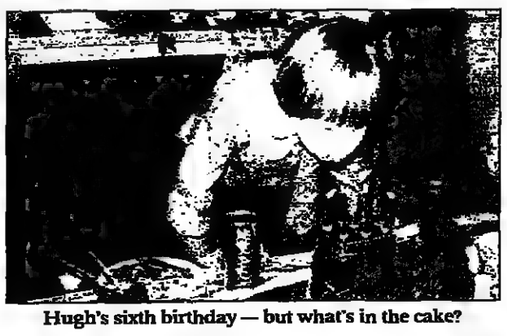
It was not long, however, before young Hugh was initiating his parents into the ways of the real thing. At the age of six he caught a perch in a lake in Ireland and was transformed by the experience of eating something he had caught himself.

Young hotshot with pigeon

His mother was ambivalent about this new development. "He introduced me to very fresh fish," she admits, adding: "But I made him gut them himself."

His burgeoning inner hunter-gatherer instinct was given a boost by the gift of a gun, which necessitated the establishment of a household rule that the young marksman had to eat anything he shot in the family's garden in Gloucestershire. The result was that he tended to keep quiet about the blackbirds and starlings he bagged. "Now, I'd eat them willingly," he says, with fearsome plausibility.

Amazingly, the man who is now widely known as "Hugh Fearlessly-Eatsitall" was a picky eater as a child away from home. At prep school, he became engaged in a war of wills with a sadistic master who insisted that he eat a bowl of porridge, which he loathed. He duly vomited all over the table. His parents rallied to their son's defence, informing the headmaster that they did not feel such a policy of feeding was appropriate in the 1970s.



Hugh's sixth birthday — but what's in the cake?

The gauging of the effect of this attempted force-feeding on his later willingness to try anything must be left to the psychologists.

Today, his mother seems a little intimidated by her son's prowess in the kitchen. "I'm rather nervous of cooking for Hugh," she says, adding wistfully: "I used to think I was rather a good cook."

When asked what she would prepare in the event of his coming home exhausted after a bout of foraging or filming the exotic happenings at dinner parties, she appears to admit ultimate defeat. "I would probably hand him the saucepan and wooden spoon and say: 'Hugh, what's for dinner?' "

هكذا من الإصل

"I am not marching in support of the present system of agriculture, because I think it stinks, and so do a lot of country dwellers"

Farmers snuff out my fiery passion

DOWN TO EARTH

PAUL HEINEY

Scouts manage it without much training, so why have I not been blessed with the deceptively simple talent of being able to apply a lighted match to a bonfire and get it blazing? Forgive my impatience, but this cannot wait till Bonfire Night. On March 1, there is to be another march on London organised by the Countryside Alliance: an invasion of angry tweed and waving blackthorn sticks. This time I intend to show them my support, providing that by then I am able to strike a light.

A gang of ditch-clearers has been working its way along our lane, hacking at branches and slashing brambles to speed the flow of water from field to sea. Unlike their unsubtle counterparts, who come armed with a monstrous tractor and flail all living things into submission, these lads have done it by hand, deciding what to slay and allow to live. It is a constructive, countryman's way of going about things, which has resulted in a ditch that sits well in the landscape.

Inspired, I set to work on one of my hedges. Hedge-cutting has always been a dilemma for me because the urge to tidy up is a strong one, but the desire to let nature have its way pulls equally strongly. The balancing forces usually result in me retiring to a chair. But this year, I attacked it, cut, slashed, pruned and trimmed it, and, although it is not a patch on the work done by the lads, it will look better come the spring.

The problem is no longer the hedge but what was cut from it. The lads working in the ditch simply flung the spoils of twigs and branches on to the verge in a heap 10ft tall, gave it a few days and applied a match. It blazed, sparked, crackled and then subsided into a gentle smoking, which lasted about 24 hours, at the end of which there was a tiny pile of ash which soon dispersed on the breeze. So what happened when I applied a match to my pile of prunings? Nothing.

I lit an old pig-feed bag and plunged it into the heart of the heap and waited for a blaze. It blazed all right: the flames danced vigorously until the bag was burnt through: then it went back to sleep. It was so cool that you could have put aviation fuel on it with no risk of a bang. Which brings us to the explosive issue of the second Countryside Rally.

I was rather churlish about the first rally, not sure what it might achieve. But then when I saw that puppy-faced MP emerge triumphant from the Commons after the first success of his anti-hunting bill, clutching a cuddly toy fox and waving it in the air Chamberlain-fashion, I decided it was time for a proper war. It suddenly became clear to me that country life was about to bow to the whim of a vocal group of the emotionally crippled and sentimentally confused. I didn't care much either way until then. That cuddly toy did it.

However, I have a new problem about the forthcoming march. The National Farmers' Union says its leaders will join the march to underline the plight of its members. It is true that farmers are having a lousy time: their beef is a bogey word; the doctors tell us their lamb, pork and chicken must be treated as an infectious threat to life; the solid pound means their corn is worth less than it has ever been and, as ever, the weather's not right. And now they are being told they must get braced for a life without subsidy.

But to marry a campaign in support of hunting, and the tradition and character of rural life — which is what the Countryside Rally is all about — with a display aimed at soliciting support for agriculture is to bring together two causes which lie together uneasily.

On the whole, I am quite happy to give individual farmers my support. They operate in a marketplace which can sink as expensively as the *Titanic* one minute, soar the next on a wave of European rethinking and collapse again in an instant the moment a food scientist opens his mouth. But what I cannot support unquestioningly is *modern agriculture*.

It is a great mistake to confuse farmers and farming, and one which I try not to make. But a lot of people do not draw the distinction, and marching in support of hunting should not be interpreted as supporting modern farming methods in all their dubious glory. Indeed, these practices have done much to reduce the scale of hunting itself.

So before putting my boots on come March 1, just before the report stage of Cuddly Toy Boy's Anti-Hunting Bill, I would like someone to make it clear exactly what we are marching for. If it's in support of hunting, or at least leaving people alone to get on with their ancient ways of life, fine. But I am not marching in support of the present system of agriculture, because I think it stinks, and so do a lot of country dwellers. The organisers must make it clear before I go.

The alliance has suggested the lighting of bonfires the night before as beacons of support. I was going to contribute my hedge trimmings until I heard about the NFU jumping on the bandwagon. Now I am wondering if that is why the trimmings somehow, even bone dry, will not quite kindle.

Readers' letters are welcome on countryside matters, of all kinds. Address them to: Paul Heiney, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. They are published on the first Saturday of the month.

Some fowls are fouler than others

Chickens in Sweden are intensively reared, yet they are almost salmonella-free. **Nigel Hawkes** reports

MONTAGE/REX

Jack Cunningham's new Food Standards Agency has been set up to avoid a repeat of the salmonella-in-eggs debacle that cost Edwina Currie her ministerial job

Whenever food poisoning hits the headlines, the media line up the usual suspects. Clucking along in front is the broiler chicken, a bird with the disreputable habit of bringing stomach upsets in its wake. Its mugshot adorns a thousand articles; its eggs brought down a minister, Edwina Currie; and every year it spreads its legacy of salmonella and campylobacter a little wider.

Last year, for the first time, reported food poisoning incidents in Britain exceeded 100,000. And since only one in ten cases is notified, that probably means that a million people or more suffered. Up to 200 died. Now a White Paper announcing the establishment of the Food Standards Agency is supposed to mark a new determination to tackle the problem.

Some campaigners have seen the new agency as heralding a return to traditional, less-intensive farming. The idyll of hens scratching around a farmyard, finding their own food rather than having scientifically formulated feed stuffed down their throats, along with antibiotics to control disease and promote growth, is attractive. But it will not happen. And if it did, the effects would be likely to make things worse, not better.

Since both salmonella and campylobacter are ubiquitous in the environment, outdoor flocks would be more, not less likely to come into contact with them. The bugs do not cause disease in the birds, so it is not a matter of healthy, outdoor chickens throwing off infections. While bacteria may spread more slowly in outdoor flocks, they would still be present and much harder to eradicate. In incidents in which eggs have been implicated in human salmonella outbreaks, most were laid by free-range hens.

A more realistic future for the broiler fowl is found in Sweden: intensively reared, but in an environment as far removed from the farmyard as it is possible to imagine. The Swedes pride themselves on producing chickens free of salmonella; in this, they are unique. "They have done it, there is no serious dispute about that," says Professor Hugh Pennington of Aberdeen University, the microbiologist who wrote the official report on the *E. coli* outbreak in Scotland. "Why can't we do it here?"

The Swedish policy, explains Jan-Olof Bengtsson of the Federation of Swedish Farmers, is based on scrupulous hygiene and ruthless slaughter. Whenever salmonella is found in a bird, the entire flock is slaughtered. And by salmonella, the Swedes mean every single one of the 2,300 strains, not simply the two most common ones, *S. enteriditis* and *S. typhimurium*. Every case must be reported to the authorities, and meat infected with the organism may not be sold.

Applied in Britain, that would certainly thin out the supermarket cool cabinets. The most recent survey, carried out by the Public Health Laboratory Service in 1994, found that a third of the chickens sold in supermarkets contained salmonella. Today, says Peter Bradnock of the British Poultry Meat Federation, there are indications that levels are down.

"They were very high in the late 1980s and early 1990s," he admits. "Eight years ago, probably two-thirds of chickens were positive for salmonella, though that doesn't mean they contained enough to give you food poisoning. Today, we believe that less than 20 per cent are positive."

The Swedish scheme follows the bird through every stage from egg to supermarket, and monitors feedstuffs equally carefully. Imported chicks go into eight weeks' quarantine, when they are tested four times. Eggs for hatching are disinfected several times, and samples are taken every month from every breeder flock in production throughout the country. Feed is heat-treated to kill bacteria, and chicken houses are regularly cleaned and disinfected.

The results have been impressive. Tests in 1995-96 showed that less than one chicken in a thousand in Sweden contained salmonella, while the dangerous *enteriditis* strain has never been isolated in Sweden, either in broilers or in breeding stock.

The policy has a second benefit. The use of antibiotics as growth promoters was banned in 1986, which has avoided some problems of drug resistance. In Britain, about 30 per cent of *S. typhimurium* strains are resistant to common antibiotics, while in Sweden less than 6 per cent are.

Many elements of this programme are already in operation in Britain, where the industry has made efforts to put its house in order. But direct comparisons with Sweden are tricky. "For a start, their poultry industry is much smaller than ours," says Mr Bradnock. "Their total production is less than a fifteenth of ours. Secondly, they have very severe winters, which helps to control the build-up of salmonella in the environment. And they also operate a closed industry, protected against imports. It works, but at a very high cost."

> Outdoor flocks of chickens are more, not less likely to come into contact with salmonella strains

The acid test is whether Swedes suffer fewer cases of human food poisoning, and here the evidence is equivocal. "The rates of human infection are still high, but the Swedes claim that 70 per cent are picked up abroad, when travelling," Mr Bradnock says.

The same applies, to a lesser extent, to the British figures. At least 15 per cent, and possibly more, of the British food-poisoning cases are caught abroad, and imported chickens, on the evidence currently available, are more likely to carry the bug than British ones.

The industry believes that expensive investments are beginning to show results. More than £200 million has been spent in the past five years on new and improved housing, designed to keep infection-bearing rodents and birds out. A slaughter policy introduced for broiler breeders — the parents of the broiler birds we eat — has cut the number of positive tests from nearly 300 a month in the early 1990s to less than 20 a month today.

In fact, asserts Mr Bradnock, chicken should no longer be seen as the number one suspect. "Salmonella is higher in cattle and calves than it is in chickens, and the *typhimurium* strain is more common in pigs. Our evidence suggests that for the bulk of British production, less than 15 per cent of chickens test positive for salmonella."

But don't start celebrating just yet. Campylobacter, a bug not even identified until the 1970s, now looms larger than salmonella in the food poisoning statistics. It has probably always been there, says Professor Pennington, but it went unrecognised. "Even now, it is difficult to trace. We just don't know where the bacteria are coming from. We do know that they are widespread."

Liberating birds to scratch for themselves would probably increase infection, and campylobacter is harder to eradicate. Even the Swedes, with their scrupulous systems and small industry, admit to 10 to 15 per cent campylobacter contamination. The dose needed to provoke a stomach upset is lower than with salmonella — the only consolation is that it tends to produce isolated cases rather than epidemics.

Professor Pennington has suggested that lower stocking densities would help, but Mr Bradnock doubts it. "In poultry, there is no evidence that rates of infection for salmonella or campylobacter are related to the farming system or the stocking density," he says. "I have written to Professor Pennington to ask why he believes they are."

> The Swedish policy is based on scrupulous hygiene and ruthless slaughter of infected birds

For the moment, there is only one thing everybody agrees on. The sensible thing is to assume that all meat is contaminated, and cook it thoroughly. It may offend the sensibilities, but at least it won't upset the stomach.

THE TIMES
PRESENTS
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IN ASSOCIATION WITH
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JANE SPENCER

ON THE SPOT: HURST CASTLE, HAMPSHIRE

Rural recommendations

The place: a mile and a half of shingle spit at Keyhaven, at the entrance to the Solent, leading out to Hurst Castle. Perfect for taking a leisurely walk with the family and dogs, and ending up in the Marine Café for a cool drink or The Gun pub, which was once used as a temporary morgue for drowned bodies.

The view: on a clear day, wonderful. Views stretch over the Solent from Lymington to Christchurch and include the Needles on the Isle of Wight.

The appeal: on a stormy day, it is fascinating to watch the enormous waves and spray crashing over the rocks. On a calmer day, for having picnics at the end of the spit or sitting on the beach.

Aficionados: Locals, anglers and birdwatchers.

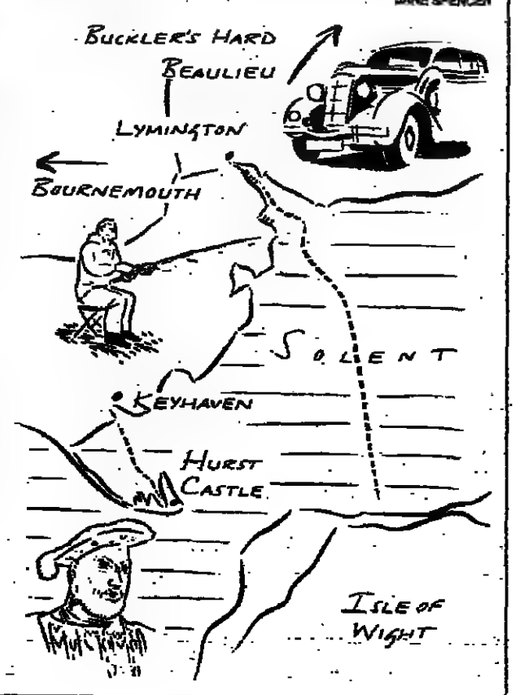
Historical interest: Hurst Castle was built as one of the defence fortifications of the Solent by Henry VIII between 1541-44. Prince Charles was imprisoned there in 1648 before being brought back to London to be beheaded. The castle was of strategic importance during the Napoleonic wars. It has since been modified. The lighthouse is reported to be haunted.

Best time to visit: any time, though early morning and late evening are quieter and great for watching the sun rise and set. The spit is exposed, so wrap up warm in winter.

OS reference: 196/898.

Also nearby: the sandy beaches of Bournemouth and the sailing town of Lymington. Further afield is Beaulieu and its motor museum, and Buckler's Hard maritime museum.

PORTIA COLWELL



Dressing up for the birds

Derwent May prepares for birdwatching in the country

What should the gentleman ornithologist wear out in the field? Derwent May has the answers

As the cold weather sets in, it is important to think about what to take with you on an expedition into the countryside. It is no use stalking a small bird in a pinewood to see whether it is a goldcrest or a firecrest if branches tip your hat over your eyes, your hands are too full of optical equipment to straighten it, and that dry ditch full of pine needles that you stepped into is in fact leaking water rapidly into your boot.

First, you need a hat that will not fall off, a coat that will keep you warm, and a pair of stout, comfortable, waterproof boots or shoes. Hoods can keep your ears warm, but I never wear one because I live by my ears in the countryside, and even in pouring rain, birds often still sing and call.

As for coats, they have many desirable features, such as pockets: wool-lined to thrust your hands into, and large ones for carrying identification books, notebooks and specimens.

Remember to avoid coats that reflect the light — birds are quick to notice the slightest flash — or rustle as you move.

Waterproof trousers show foresight, and mittens are a good idea because you need your fingers to focus your field glasses, and for picking up anything from a feather to an owl pellet (the little nuggets of bone and fur that owls cough up after eating a mouse). You can even get mittens with a flap that converts them into gloves.

A good pair of field glasses is a basic necessity when it comes to equipment. These have improved immeasurably over the years in which I have been birdwatching. They need to combine three things: good magnification, good field of vision, and lightness of weight.

These qualities used to compete with each other, because in the past, glasses with both good magnification and good field of vision were large out of necessity, and were consequently also heavy. You had to choose one or the other, because selecting a lightweight pair meant compromising with small magnification and field.

Birdwatchers usually had 8x30 glasses, where 8x represents the magnification and 30 is a measurement of angle of vision. Nowadays, lighter plastics are just as good for lenses as glass; it is possible to get lightweight 10x50 or 12x50 binoculars.

> For the unsteady, there are binoculars with image stabilisers; even if the glasses shake, the bird doesn't

For those with unsteady hands, there are special binoculars with image stabilisers — even if the glasses shake, the bird doesn't — and others filled with nitrogen to prevent internal misting.

The wide field of vision is necessary to pick up and follow flying birds. For those who find it difficult to get on to a flying bird in the first place, here is a tip. A common problem is a tendency to look too low — or sometimes too high — and identifying these bad habits in the first place can help gradually correct them.

Watching butterflies and dragonflies can present a problem — and if you are trying to distinguish the different skipper butterflies, say, or the darter dragonflies, you need a good look.

But many field glasses will not focus under 15 or 20 feet. If you approach the insect with the naked eye, it flies off — but step back to look at it through your glasses, and you are too far away. For these purposes you can get special short-range field glasses.

Birdwatchers can often be seen trailing through the countryside weighed down by telescopes and long, shining tripod rods, equipment useful only if you are going coastal watching, or to a hide, where you know the waders or geese are going to stay in the same place. It is difficult to use a telescope on small, moving birds — the magnification is high, but the field small.

If, however, you are going to scan the choppy seas for scoters or divers, which often swim far out from shore, a telescope firmly set on its tripod is essential. They can also be set up in hides, and trained on a jack snipe or wood sandpiper through the viewing slot. A new device is a clamp for fastening your telescope to the ledge beneath the viewing slots. Otherwise hides can become such a forest of tripods that you cannot move without knocking one over.

Fewer people are picking flowers or collecting insects, though professional botanists and entomologists need to. It is illegal to take any plant without the landowner's permission, and by picking flowers you may diminish the amount of seed available for birds to feed on.

But to take one flower home to identify, where the species is abundant, is not too reprehensible. For that it is best to use a polythene bag, otherwise, specimens that are just shoved in a pocket will arrive home as a mess of broken leaves and withered petals.

Hardly anyone collects butterflies these days but butterfly nets can still be bought, and the professionals still use cyanide bottles to kill their specimens quickly. There is now even a weapon called a fogging gun, which sprays a mist of poison into the treetops and all the insects fall down dead.

Better just to throw on a weatherproof jacket and swing your glasses around your neck, and go out and see what nature brings.

DES JENSON/BIRD COURTESY OF GET STUFFED

Egrets, we've had a few

FEATHER REPORT

EGRETS seem to be the birds of the month. Little egrets nested in Britain for the first time two years ago, and in the past few weeks many wanderers have been reported. They are becoming quite familiar here. But last week another egret, which is much more rarely seen here, was found at Graveney in north Kent. This was a cattle egret, a species that used to be known as the buff-backed heron.

It has been walking about among a flock of sheep outside the church. This is the sort of company in which you often find cattle egrets, though as their name suggests they prefer a herd of cows. They feed on the insects that the animals' feet disturb, and also on the ticks that fall from the animals' coats. They sometimes ride on the backs of cattle, picking their prey out from a moving dinner table.

They are common in many parts of the world, from America to Australia, but in Europe they are probably most familiar to travellers in the south of Spain. The bird in Kent may be feeling lonely, since they usually go around in large flocks. They nest in low trees in marshy places, and as many as 100 of their nests have been counted in a single spreading tree.

CATTLE egrets are not hard to distinguish from little egrets. The latter are slim, elegant white creatures which stride about on long black legs and yellow feet. They also have long, delicate necks and black bills. The cattle egrets are much more dumpy and waddle along, with their heads often withdrawn into their hunched shoulders. They, too, are white, but their beaks are yellow, turning redder in the summer, when they also acquire a orangey-buff mantle and crown. They look heavy-jowled, because of the thick feathers that hang from their chin. I find them delightful birds, tame and trusting.

A third species has also been found here recently — the great white egret. Two individuals appear to be present, one of which is haunting Stiffkey marshes on the north Norfolk coast, while the other is at the Earls Barton gravel pits in Northamptonshire. This is an even thinner bird than the little egret, though it is much taller. It has a twisting, snake-like neck and a yellow beak. Its feet as well as its legs are black (though they are often invisible under water or mud).

The Northamptonshire bird, thought to come from America, has been around for several months. In fact, this winter it has been noticeable how many of the rarer visitors have been staying put, so that many birdwatchers have been able to go and see them.

One exceptional long-stayer is the black-winged stilt that has been at the RSPB reserve at Titchwell in north Norfolk for four years. This is a spectacular black-and-white bird with long pink legs, which stalks about in the lagoons and on the salt marshes and seems to be perfectly content. It may have come up from the salt-pans of the Camargue.

BESIDES the black-winged stilt and the great white egret, north Norfolk has also been favoured since well before Christmas by a beautiful small bird, a rose-coloured starling. This has been flying around at Sheringham. It is a relative of our starling and about the same size, but is pink beneath and on the back, with a black head. It is quite unmistakable.

Another exotic fixture is the hoopoe, which has been entertaining shoppers on some wasteland beside a supermarket in the centre of Barnstaple, in Devon. That has also been around since late autumn. Hoopoes are widespread in southern Europe, but we only get a few chance visitors here, usually in the spring. They are very striking with their pink body, their black-and-white-barred back and their head-crest like a ring of spikes.

Finally, in south London there is a pied-billed grebe from America on the lake at Tooting Bec Common — a nondescript little bundle of feathers, distinguished only by a black bar across its beak. It is probably the bird I wrote about last winter, when there was one a few miles away on South Norwood Lake. If so, then it, too, would seem to have taken up permanent residence here.

DERWENT MAY

● **What's about:** *Birders — listen for the drumming of great-spotted woodpeckers in woods and parks. Twitchers — dark-eyed junco, Chester; penduline tit, Poole Harbour, Dorset. Details from Birdline 0891 700222. Calls cost 50p a minute.*

PETER BROWN

The cattle egret is often seen in the company of sheep

Angling for those hidden treasures

Brian Clarke talks to a man with a magnificent obsession: collecting old fishing tackle

British Fishing Lures 1653-1930 would not have been out of place as a set subject on Mastermind. If Chris Sandford had chosen it, he would have kept his cool and won. Mr Sandford has not only published a £60-a-copy book on collecting artificial baits of the period but, as a former film and television actor, not even the lights would have made him sweat.

"Non-anglers would think collecting old fishing tackle is crazy," he says. "Well, it is crazy. But I tell you this — there are an awful lot of us buying the stuff up and hoarding it away. There are a lot of secret squirrels out there."

There are not many squirrels as acquisitive and orderly as Mr Sandford. The mill he lives in on the banks of the River Rother in Sussex is as dusted and polished inside as it is painted and trim outside. The room where he houses one of Britain's best-known collections is part exhibition case, part Aladdin's Cave.

Rods gleam in varnished rows on the walls, reels glint and seduce from behind polished glass, floats in upright boxes stand as red-topped and regimented as toy soldiers on parade. There are fishing flies, fishing hooks, fishing nets, fishing books. There are old wicker creels. Of course, there are artificial lures, hundreds of them, some with origins unknown, going back into the mists of time. There are lures that look like fish, lures that look like mice, lures that look like frogs with spring-loaded, rubber legs. I notice the forlornly patented Bob-Bet Bait Box with its revolving lid. "Half a Turn and There's Your Worm," the box proclaims. Somehow it never caught on.

"I'm obsessed by it," Mr Sandford says. "I have been for years. Lots of us are — hundreds of us, thousands of us in this country alone."

Given that just about everything to do with angling is surprising to those not in the sport, maybe the fact that there is an obsessive, wild-eyed international market in old tackle should surprise no one. After all, there are, according to the last National Angling Survey, 3.2 million fisherfolk in England and Wales alone, so statistically there will be a few interested in collecting. What is more, the first book on angling in the English language, *A Treatyse of Fysshynge wyth an Angle*, was published in 1496 and written by a nun, so the sport goes back a long way and there have to be collectables around.

Hooked on fishing lures

For all that, the fact that Christie's and Bonhams have several sales of fishing tackle a year between them is not, at a guess, common knowledge. And the news that the glossiest names are not the real movers and shakers will always surprise some. The high-rollers in fishing tackle are relative unknowns outside the trade. Neil Freeman, who runs angling auctions in Chiswick, west London, and John Mullock of Mullock Madeley, who does the same at Ludlow, are the names that get collecting pulses racing. When either of these two run an auction, Mr Sandford says it is a shoulder-to-shoulder job. There are telephone lines open for bidders from the United States, Japan and several European countries if something juicy comes up.

While prices have not yet reached the dizzy heights paid for old angling literature — anyone with a nice first of *The Treatyse* by Dame Juliana Berners would be naming his own price and starting in six figures — prices for tackle are on their way up. The highest prices for a rod and a reel both went to telephone bidders at Freeman's Chiswick sale. A 2¼ in Perfect fly reel made by the famous Alnwick manufacturers Hardy in 1891 cost the buyer £18,000 and a one-off, jewelled exhibition rod went for £16,000. "Rods are the soft end of the market," Mr Sandford says. "They take up a lot of space. A couple of hundred is a high price for a rod.

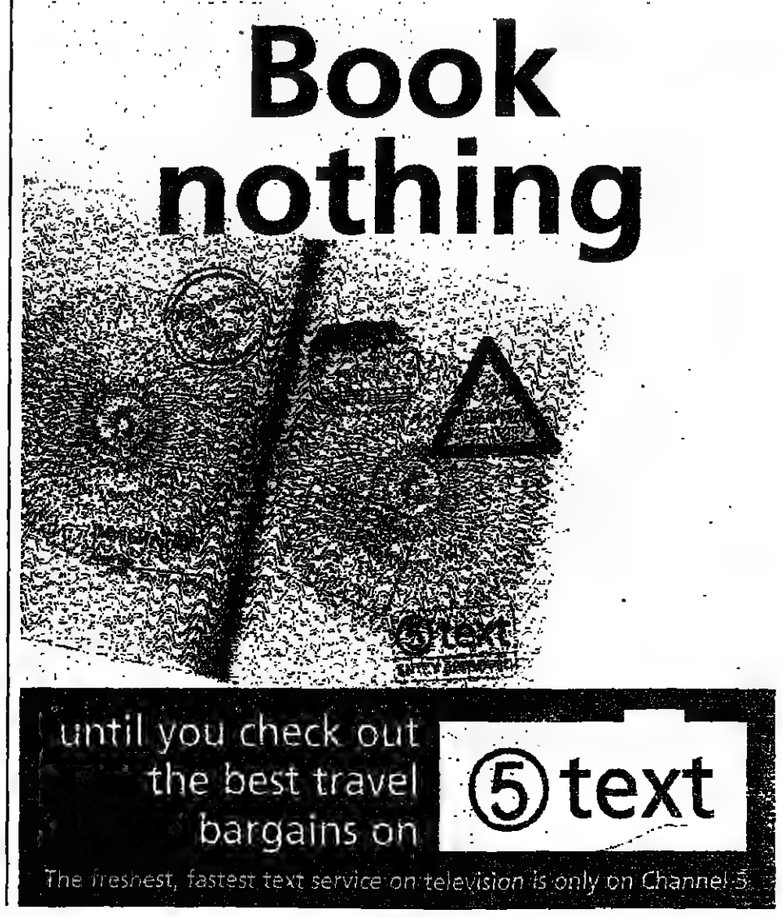
"The big money is in reels. They are small and beautiful and the engineering is usually fantastic. There are tales of old man Hardy, the founder, pacing his factory floor with a sledge-hammer, smashing anything that he didn't think was up to scratch."

Mr Sandford is a regular columnist on the subject in the angling press and takes his Vintage Fishing Tackle Road Show — a kind of special-interest *Antiques Road Show* — to game and country fairs all over the country. "My great regret is that I got into it all so late," he says. "I fished as a lad and I fish now. In between, life and career got in the way. I somehow let it slip by."

In the 1960s, Mr Sandford was Walter Potts, *Coronation Street*'s singing window cleaner. He became a national figure and got a song to No 11 in the charts. He played alongside Tommy Steele in the film *Half a Sixpence* and trod the boards at the Royal Court Theatre in London.

For 20 years he has made a comfortable living as "the voice" of many television and radio commercials and is a partner in a successful production company in Covent Garden. "But not for much longer," he says. "We've got big plans for the company in the short term. In the medium term, I want to be doing the important things."

Like fishing? "Yes. Collecting and fishing and fishing and collecting. Then I'll collect some more."



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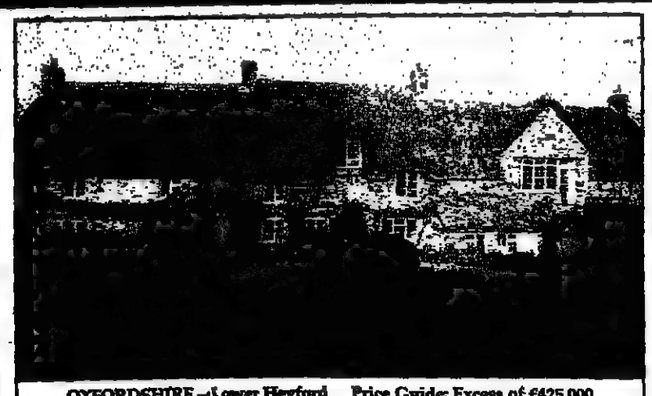

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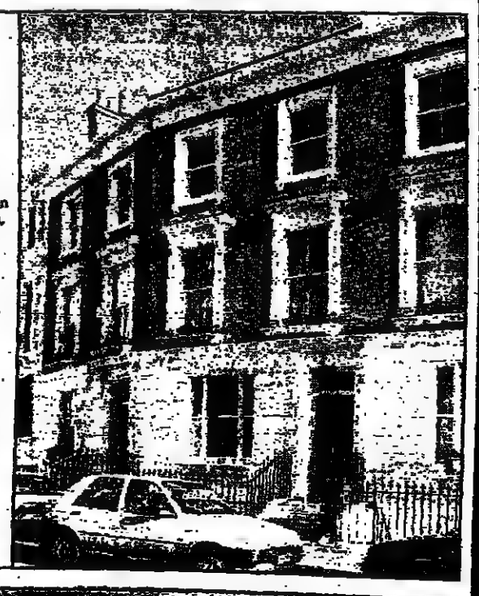

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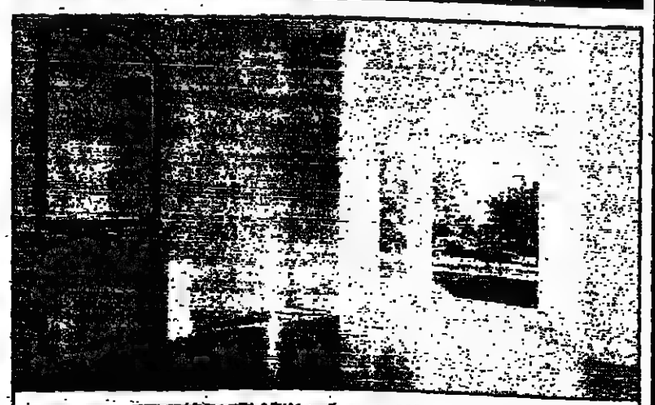

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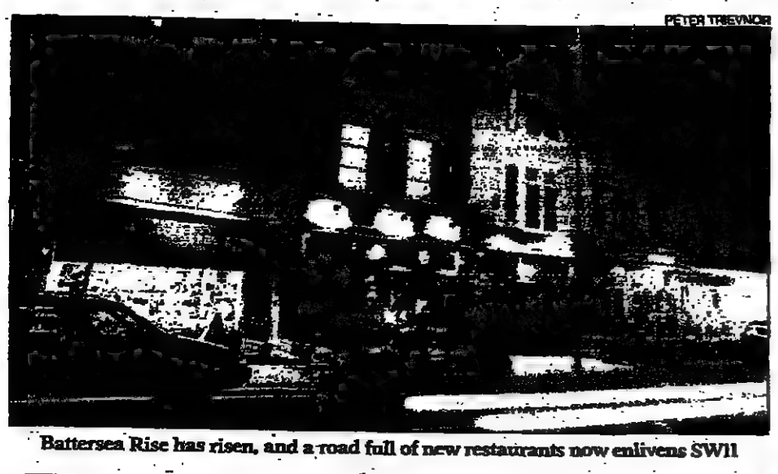
Once Battersea's most famous residents were dogs. Now, they're a new breed, including a Getty. **Rachel Kelly** reports



PETER TREVNOR

Battersea Rise has risen, and a road full of new restaurants now enlivens SW11

Powerhouse of the south

It was once famous for its power station, its dog home and the fact that its residents apologised for not living in Chelsea. But with the news that its latest resident is a junior member of the Getty family, Battersea has finally arrived on London's social map.

Mark Getty has just bought Julian Metcalfe's house — he of Prêt à Manger sandwich shop fame. The 7,000 sq ft, £1.65 million house in Bridge Lane has a 60ft loft that houses an 18-seat dining table and a streamlined and stainless kitchen that would not shame one of Mr Metcalfe's sandwich shops. Then there is parking for seven cars and six other bedrooms, as well as an extra playroom.

The house screams "space" and is typical of some of the new developments that have sprung up in SW11. Former derelict industrial buildings and schools that once typified Battersea's image as a sink of inner-city squalor have been transformed into the kind of square footage that makes established houses north of the river seem downright poky.

Ivor Dickinson, the manager of established local agent Douglas & Gordon, says part of Battersea's metamorphosis into trendy destination is because of such schemes.

"First-class developments of such places as The Village, a former London Board School off Latchmere Road made into flats, began to attract a celebrity clientele, and the scheme became an 'it' address in the gossip columns," Mr Dickinson says.

Among Village residents are Viscount Linley and his wife Serena, Michael Caine's daughter Natasha, and the Earl and Countess of Cawdor, as well as a crop of advertising executives, television producers and City traders.

"We're a young couple with no children," Viscount Linley says. "We thought we might live in Belgravia, where I have been involved in the development of a mews house, and we moved to The Village with a view to moving on.

"But the place is very special, with a great, fun atmosphere, so we have decided to stay." The Linleys are now selling their Belgravia mews house through Savills.

There are other new developments too. Until recently, the area along the river was littered with abandoned buildings. Now the scale and the standard of residential development has lifted the cachet of Battersea.

Much of the south bank between Albert and Battersea bridges is being redeveloped, and work by the Hong Kong firm Parkview is expected to start to turn Battersea Power Station into a cinema and leisure complex this year, with outlets for Harvey Nichols and Planet Hollywood also included in the plans.

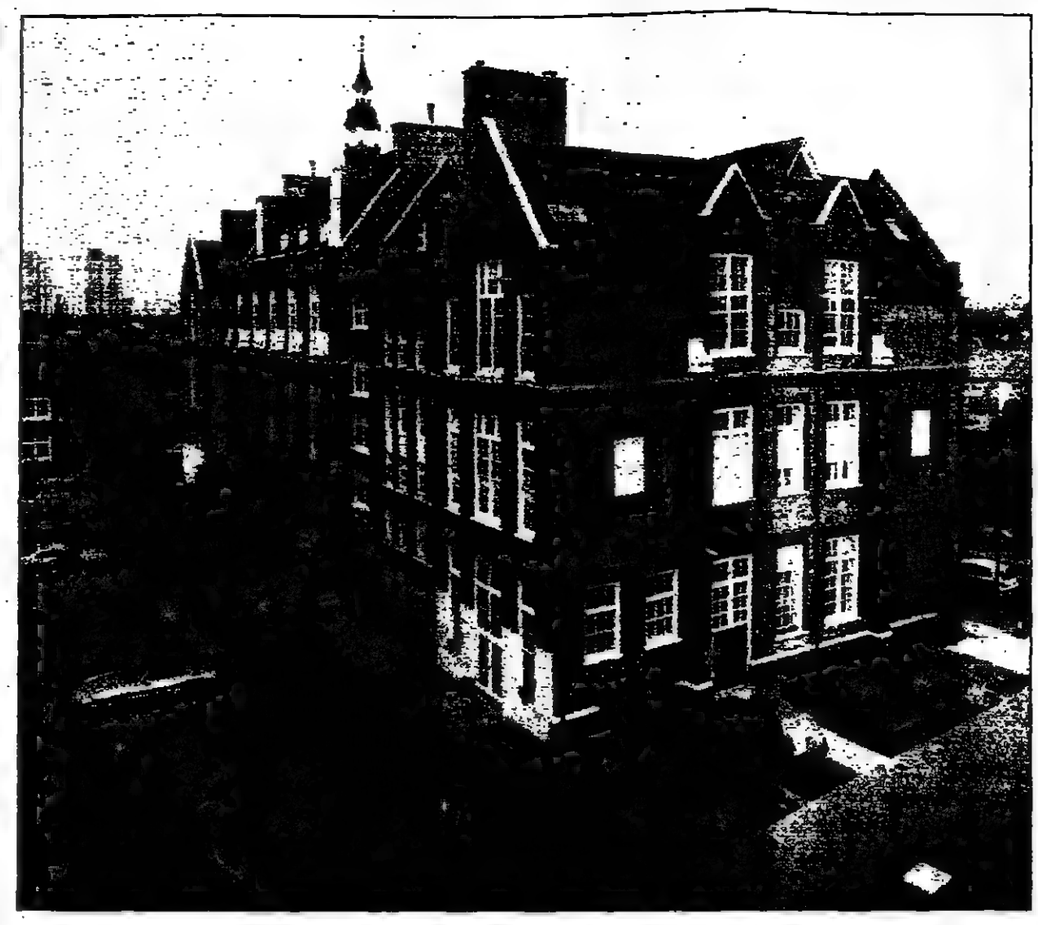
There is Norman Foster's Riverside One scheme, the Albert Bridge development, the pricey new Montevetro glass wedge of flats on the riverside by Richard Rogers and Taylor Woodrow, and new developments along Park Gate Road, all of which have created a friendly vista for sightseers in Chelsea-on-the-Thames's north bank. Linda Beaney, who is selling the Montevetro flats through Beaney Pearce, reports that 40 of 103 have already sold.

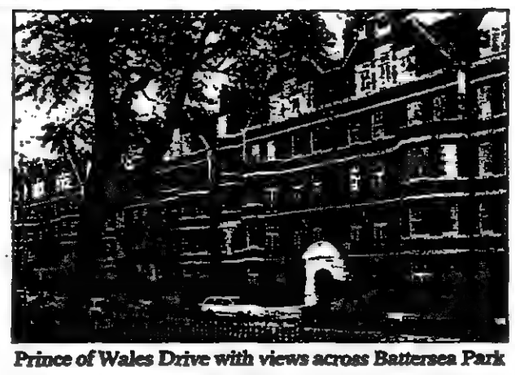
"This has encouraged northern natives to drift south," says Tony D'Alton of Knight Frank. "In doing so, they discovered that Battersea had become a cool place to be."

The Marquess of Milford Haven, Lady Kenilworth, Lady Theresa Chipman (the former Lady Theresa Manners, who flirted with pop stardom in the Eighties), actress Helen Mirren and fashion commentator Susannah Bertelsen (formerly Susannah Constantine) are among those who have gone south of the river as central London is increasingly colonised by bankers and foreigners.

Mrs Bertelsen, who does a fashion programme for Granada on Sky Television, moved from Cornwall Gardens, South Kensington, to Battersea last June.

She says: "I love it. It is a nice place to live and a good investment. I think you get more for your money in Battersea than anywhere else in London. There's nowhere else in London where you can buy a whole house next to a park."





Prince of Wales Drive with views across Battersea Park

Mrs Bertelsen says she appreciates being "five minutes away from Chelsea" and describes her area as "quiet, but with all the benefits of living in London.

"It is getting a little cosy. Every day you have someone else who's just bought a house down the road."

For the families living in the rows of sturdy Edwardian and Victorian terraced houses to the south of Prince of Wales Drive, Battersea Park, with its easy access to the West End and Sloane Square, is a major draw. New schools include Thomas's, Eaton House and Broomwood Hall; there are new restaurants on Northcote Road and Battersea Rise. And the latest rumour is that Sir Terence Conran plans to open a Conran Bluebird in the area.

Cheap it is not. A two-bedroom cottage on the Victorian Shaftesbury estate will cost around £180,000, and the mansion block flats overlooking the park start at £220,000.

Three to four-bedroom small terraced houses in areas such as Octavia Street now cost between £300,000 and £400,000, while larger houses on Albert Bridge Road cost more than £600,000. New flats on the riverfront in the old wharfs could cost £500,000.

Estimates are that prices have risen by 37 per cent during the past 12 months, a sharper increase than anywhere else in the capital.

Viscount Linley, above, originally planned only a brief stay in The Village, left, but has now snubbed Belgravia for Battersea

Helen Mirren has been a resident for 13 years

The key difference, says Nick Globe from Winkworth, is that people with rising incomes wish to upgrade locally.

The most desirable areas are known as "between the commons", which includes streets such as Broxash Road, Thurleigh Road, Morella Road and Gorst Road; and "The Toastrack" which includes Henderson Road, Baskerville Road, Nicosia Road and Patten Road.

He remembers selling a five-bedroom house in Brymaer Road for £650,000 last year. "I remembered that in the last boom it went for £280,000."

Of course, not all of Battersea has become fashionable. There are still great stretches of squalid council estates, and for all the talk of redevelopment, Battersea Power Station is still a rotting hulk which has remained an eyesore for years.

If Parkview's scheme does not materialise, as so many schemes have failed before, perhaps the Getty family may expand its interest in Battersea to include the former power station.

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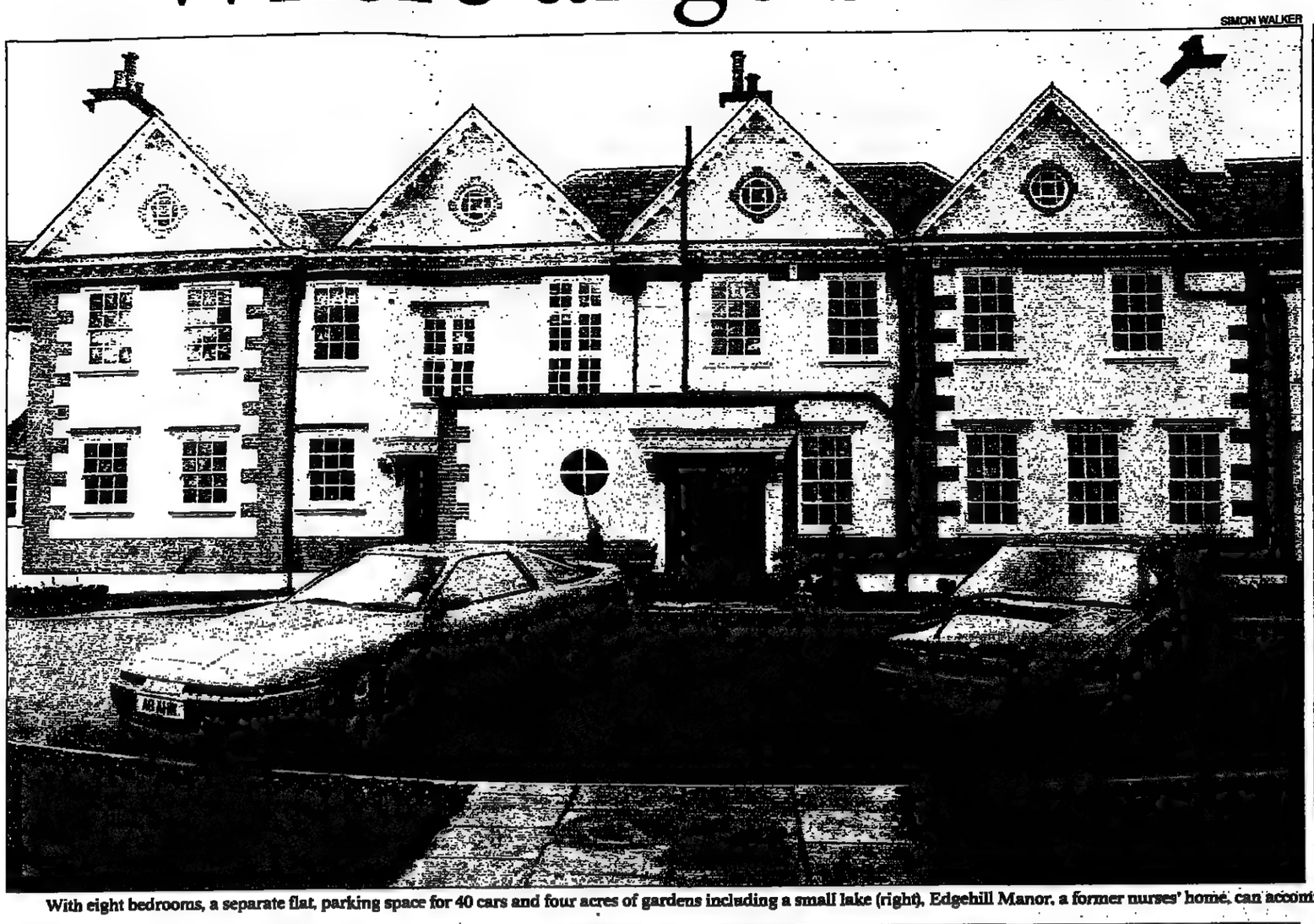
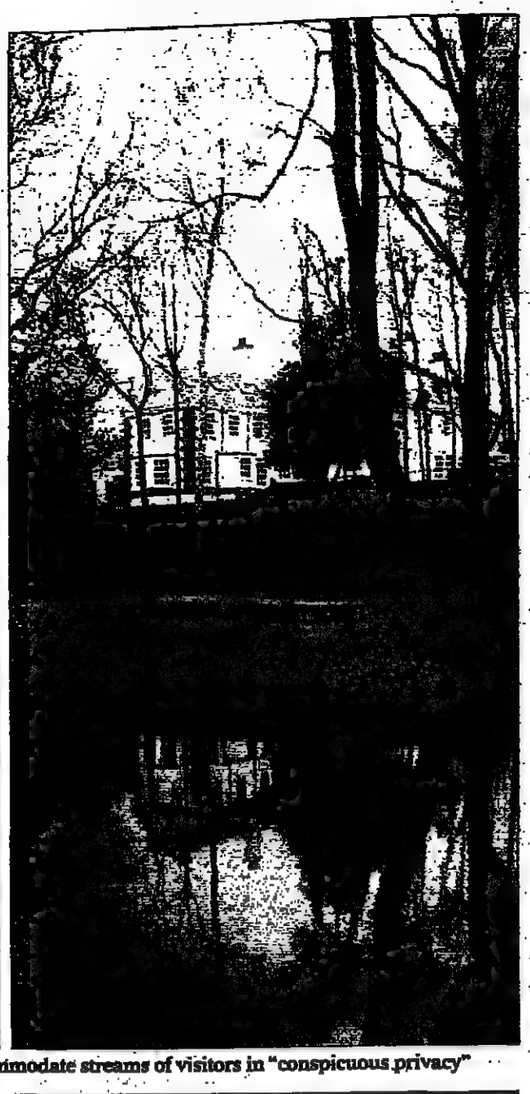




With eight bedrooms, a separate flat, parking space for 40 cars and four acres of gardens including a small lake (right), Edgehill Manor, a former nurses' home, can accommodate streams of visitors in "conspicuous privacy"

Philip Delves Broughton finds a former nurses' home brought back to the rudest of health

A downstairs sitting room where guests can stretch out

Quiet please, big break in progress: lining up another pot shot in the snooker room

HOUSE OF THE WEEK

Not so long ago, Totteridge was a rural spot, high above north London. From the east, fresh winds whistled in from the Baltic, over the flat Netherlands and the Thames Estuary before hitting this gentle rise of land, the first above sea level for hundreds of miles. The bustle of London was visible but inaudible below. Then the footballers arrived, along with the record producers and, as predictably as doom follows gloom, the accountants.

Now, Totteridge is an agglomeration of suburban mansions, choked with sports cars and expensive hairspray. Luckily, there is a biting wind to blow away the fug.

Driving up to Edgehill Manor, up on Highwood Hill, you pass the homes of Arsène Wenger, the French manager of Arsenal Football Club; the Tottenham Hotspur players Les Ferdinand and David Ginola; Jeremy Beadle, the television prankster; and Mickey Most, the record producer whose home, when it was built, was the largest new private house in Britain.

Sean Bean, an actor who makes great play of his Sheffield roots, has clearly had a change of heart, as he too has bought in Totteridge.

It is obvious why footballers and record producers like it up here. If not anonymity, there is at least space. Space to build recording studios and ten-car garages. Space for hot tubs and Jacuzzis. Space to recreate that most admired of templates for luxury living around here, Hugh Hefner's Playboy Mansion.

As for the accountants, perhaps they move here to rub up close to celebrity. David Warwick, a tax accountant, is the sort of man you would want taking care of business. Dressed in a black suit and black shirt buttoned to the top without a tie, he has a salt and pepper moustache, steely spectacles and an engagingly mercenary manner.

He bought Edgehill Manor towards the end of the last recession and is now selling up. The house, built in 1905 as a private residence, had been a nurses' home for years. It had lain empty for three years before Mr Warwick bought it.

He and his wife Karen and their two teenage sons — "I am blessed with two sons," says Mr Warwick, "you can quote me on that, 'blessed'," — then lived in it while it was completely overhauled by builders and renovators.

"There were builders in here for six months doing nothing but chipping white paint off the wooden walls," says Mr Warwick.

Several of the builders had fond memories of visiting the house when it was filled with nurses.

Electric gates at the front lead to off-street parking for 40 cars. Mr Warwick also has planning permission to build a swimming complex and a six-car garage to the side of the drive.

Cars are a big deal in Totteridge. For all the green space and clean air, even a quick spin to the shops or to pick up the children from school seems to involve thousands of pounds' worth of purring German engineering.

It is all part of the modern phenomenon of conspicuous privacy. The rich and semi-famous may move up here to go unnoticed, and yet the means they use to go unnoticed are nothing if not obvious.

Around Totteridge, safeguards of one's privacy, such as big houses, high walls and tinted-window cars, are as much a mark of success as paparazzi on the doorstep and trophy wives.

Inside, Edgehill Manor is brand, spanking new. The hallway is covered with wood panelling. Off to the right is a large dining room and a snooker room containing a full-size table.

Ahead are a formal reception room and a more private sitting room. What is not wood is light blue or pink, like a private doctor's surgery.

Rows of wide windows look out on to the property's four acres of garden, which includes a small lake and backs on to the Belmont Riding Centre. The house is clearly too big for the Warwicks. It only comes to life in those areas they really use.

Upstairs, there are eight bedrooms, all densely carpeted and newly furnished. Swags of chintz hang beneath pelmets and the patterned sofas are still delivery-van fresh.

On the top floor are the old servants' quarters, which have been turned into a separate flat, completing the rather institutional atmosphere that still lingers around the place.

Nonetheless, anyone with the sort of money it takes to buy Edgehill Manor will doubtless have the extra money to make it a home.

The guide price is about £4 million, though it fluctuates according to whether you want the swimming complex and garage built for you or want to build them yourself.

Asked why he is selling, Mr Warwick says: "I can't afford not to." All the market conditions are right to sell a place like this. And if you have 40 cars that need parking, it is what the fashion crowd would call a "must-have".

● *Agents: Statons (0181-449 3383); Hamptons (0171-794 8222)*

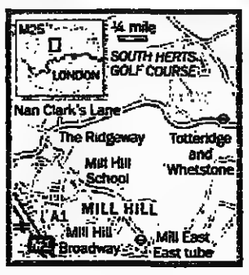
DREAM HOMES AROUND TOTTERIDGE

JEREMY BEADLE, the television presenter, lives with his wife, Sue, and children in a large house near Hadley Wood (right). The property, which dates back to 1903, was renovated by Mr Beadle when he bought it. A two-storey library, which houses 20,000 books, has been built in place of the swimming pool. The house, valued at £1 million, has its own editing suite.

SEAN BEAN, the actor, lives with his wife, Abigail, in a six-bedroom Georgian manor house in Totteridge (left). The red-bricked ivy-clad house, which Mr Bean bought two years ago, is situated close to Totteridge Green and has a large walled garden. The property is estimated to be worth about £1.5 million.

LENNOX LEWIS, the world heavyweight boxing champion, lives in a five-bedroom detached house near Hadley Wood (right). The mock-tudor fronted house, which was bought for £500,000 has a games room with a pool table, a tennis court, and is surrounded by a 10ft hedge to ensure privacy. He also owns a house in Jamaica.

MARKET COMMENT



WITH the M1 to the west and the A1 (the Watford Way at that point) bisecting it and leading to the M25 three miles away, Mill Hill and Totteridge, on the northwest outskirts of London, attract those who need access to the metropolis and to the north.

Indeed, leaving town is considerably easier than driving the ten miles into it: the journey into the West End can take anything from 25 minutes to an hour or more by car. Alternatively, the mainline service into King's Cross stops at Mill Hill Broadway, while east towards Finchley, the Northern Line Underground grinds into the City and all points south.

Apart from accessibility, the area's attractions are those of solid suburbia. From modest village beginnings, it established itself in the 1930s around a group of good independent schools, including Mill Hill School for boys, Belmont Junior School and The Mount.

Mill Hill has a riding centre and cricket club of its own, golf courses, green-belt open spaces and even a few farms; the district sells itself on the appeal of a comfortable semi-rural existence inside the M25.

The bulk of the housing stock consists of family homes built between the wars, with a sprinkling of period properties thrown in. George Roberts, of independent estate agent Blade & Co, says that many buyers stay within the area: "They tend to start in a three-bedroom semi and trade up."

The most desirable roads in Mill Hill are further east around The Ridgeway, including Uphill Road, Wills Grove, Marsh Lane and Nan Clark's Lane. Prices around these plum addresses rise to £2-£3 million for five or six bedrooms, indoor pool, and maybe an acre of land.

Totteridge Lane, which leads into the smartest part of Mill Hill, runs east to west along a long ridge: houses on the southern side enjoy the sun and the southerly views across the valley — and a 10 per cent premium as a result.

TOP OF THE Totteridge stakes, and eagerly snapped up by the celebrities who have gravitated to the area, are the big houses in several acres around Totteridge Common and the Green, which sell for £1-£8 million. Building is still going on: three new 6,000 sq ft neo-Georgian villas on Totteridge Common are coming to the market at about £2.5 million, with one already under offer. Substantial family houses in the £500,000 to £1 million bracket cluster on the north side of the Common, on roads such as Pine Grove, Northcliffe Drive and Grange Avenue.

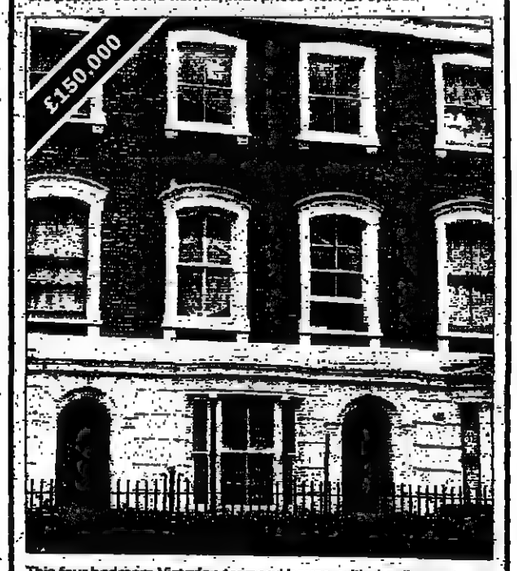
FAITH GLASGOW

HOME SWAP

VICTORIA PARK, with its elegant 19th-century double-fronted houses, is the Bevady Hills of London's East End. Many of the houses are on land owned by the Crown Estates, with leases up to 70 years. Such properties are highly prized, with prices of up to £375,000 for a six-bedroom detached house with views over the park and its lakes. Freehold Victorian terraced houses near the park are good value, with prices from £155,000 for three bedrooms. Larger five or six-bedroom houses around the park and nearby London Fields cost from £195,000 to £300,000, following price rises of 30 per cent last year, according to agents Winkworth.

In the Yorkshire Dales, there is high demand for any good house in the range £150,000 to £200,000, which would buy a four-bedroom period stone-built home. Hot-spots include James Herriot country, around Wensleydale and Coverdale, and the villages of East Witton, West Burton and Carlton, around the market town of Leyburn. Two-up, two-down cottages in good condition start at £75,000. A renovated 18th-century farmhouse, with traditional outbuildings in 30 acres, will cost about £450,000.

The northeast coast of Angus is one of the cheapest parts of Scotland in which to buy a house. It offers rugged coastal scenery and rolling countryside, with good fishing and hillwalking. Property prices are at least 30 per cent below that around Edinburgh, says GA Town & Country. Period country houses start at £150,000; for £350,000 you could buy a restored category "A" listed ten-bedroom castle in 47 acres. Stone-built cottages with up to three-bedrooms are popular second homes, with prices from £70,000.



This four-bedroom Victorian terraced house, with a cellar and rear garden, in St Thomas Place, near London Fields, E9, can be yours for just under £150,000 (Winkworth, 0181-986 4216).

In northeast Scotland, a little less (£149,000) will buy Woodside House, the major portion of a category "B" listed Victorian mansion, with its own driveway, a double garage and two acres of private gardens, near Arbroath. It has three large reception rooms, a classical sweeping staircase, original stained-glass windows, and four bedrooms (GA Town & Country, 0131-226 6663).

Spend a little more (£160,000) in the Yorkshire Dales and you can buy Coverley House, a Grade II listed four-bedroom Georgian house, in Carlton village in the heart of Coverdale, five miles from Middleham. It has a walled garden and beautiful views over the Dales (GA Town & Country, 01969-623451).

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ATTRACTIVE, prof, lady, 39, outgoing, happy, GSOH, no time, enjoys travel, countryside, evenings in & out. Life in general. WLTM someone similar, 38-55, to share it all with. London/ Home/ Surrey. Box No 9548

ATTRACTIVE, gentle Irish Colleen, slim, traditional values, seeks honourable, successful gentleman, 57+, of good standing, not divorced/ separated, for caring & sharing. Ex 9473

ATTRACTIVE, professional lady who is romantic, intelligent & fun WLTM a genuine, intelligent, big man with a GSOH, 38-45, preferably living in the south of England. Box No 9389

ATTRACTIVE professional lady, 42, likes skiing & travel, seeks attractive, intelligent, decisive late, n/s male, 38-42. Recent photo please. Kent based. Box No 9446

ATTRACTIVE, affectionate lady, 30, 5'6", graduate, many interests, WLTM tall, n/s, warm man, 28-38, S.E. London/ N.W. Kent. Phone/phone. Box No 9514

ATTRACTIVE career lady, late 40s, petite, young in mind & body, own house & car, WLTM cultured gentleman up to 50 yrs. Northants/Box No 9622

ATTRACTIVE, affectionate, petite Dr, vegan, loving & caring, WLTM that special, exciting, reliable, professional man, 45-55. London/ Surrey. Please Reply to Box No 9575

ATTRACTIVE, slim lady WLTM fit, happy, successful businessman, n/s, 42-54, for genuine sharing relationship. Midlands based. Box No 9525

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BLONDE, 48, elegant, accomplished lady, loves travelling, entertaining, gardening and home, seeking to meet accomplishment gentleman of similar interests, who would offer companionship & marriage if suitable & for mutual life enhancement. Box 9549

BRIGHT, bubbly brunette single country gentlewoman, Dorset/ London. Well spoken, 6', 50-60, n/s. Must enjoy walking, cycling, books, antiques & the Arts. Box No 9505

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CONTINENTAL lady, 34, with young son, seeks warm, honest, charming, healthy professional who needs a good woman to make his life complete. Age immaterial. Please Reply to Box No 9585

COSMOPOLITAN? SOuth? Attractive slim lawyer with most for life, n/s, late 40s, n/s jewish, seeks successful educated mate (perhaps ex-patriot) for mind, body and soul with whom she can share enthusiasms, fun, family, friends and peace. I love music, theatre, ballet, sailing, skiing and scuba, country and city life, travel, and am ready to share your own premises too. Photo please. Please Reply to Box No 9532

EUROPEAN lady of class, 53, slim, n/s, jewish, WLTM similar man for serious relationship. Photo answer only please. Please reply to Box No 9470

FUN loving attractive brunette, warm, sincere, well travelled, sensitionally intelligent! Loves life to the full. Enjoys laughter, dining, champagne, driving, loves music. Now searching for someone like you. WLTM a successful, educated, n/s gentleman (40-55) very quality! handsome, sincere, with a very GSOH and a real zest for life. Please make it all worth while. Letter and photo appreciated. Greater London. Box 9492

FLEA-LOVERS, attractive country girl, early 30s, WLTM a man, late 30-50, with GSOH. South Coast. Box No 9402

GERRARD That ladies wishing to meet genuine English gentleman. Call Terry Wilkins on 01753 862134 and meet me for a cup of tea and a chat about the facts.

GO-BETWEEN seeks a very special, stylish, sophisticated, successful, independent, public school man, under 45, with similar interests for a good-looking, classy, slim, well travelled London based divorcee of 37 who is a good sportswoman with varied interests. Please reply with recent photograph to Box No 9570

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INTELLIGENT, attractive, rather lonely lady with diverse interests, performing arts, domestic & outdoor pursuits, seeks sophisticated professional gentleman, n/s, GSOH, tall, not unlook, 55-68. London & SE Coast area. Box No 9621

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THE TIMES
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MID 30's, tall, slim, dark, good humoured, would like to share Manet, theatre, & the arts, walks followed by pub lunch. Age immaterial. Box No 9608

MILDLY Jewish, successful, attractive, intelligent, compassionate, cultivated interests, WLTM successful cultured man 40-50, London. Photo appreciated. Please Reply to Box No 9552

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SINGLE, attractive, graduate female, brunette, WLTM minimum, professional gentleman for love & romance. Ex 9469

SINGLE male, professional female, very attractive, adventurous, early 40's, seeks companionship & charming man. Box No 9524

SPORTY, government employee, many media country man loving sport, 50ish, for golf, tennis, sailing etc. South Coast. Please reply to Box 9515

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GOOD LOOKING Kent male, young 47, 5'8", likes music, sport, books, cinema, dining out, travel, seeks n/s slim, attractive lady, 42-49, for long term relationship. Photo please. Box No 9563

HERTFORDSHIRE City, early 40's, seeks attractive 30-40 lady who likes travel, eating out, fast cars, having fun & wants that special sparkle back in her life. Please approached but not essential. London/Surrey/Bucks. Ex 9541

HERTS. Const. BC, 51, n/s, WLTM slim lady to share. Interests, Travel, Eating Out, Country side. Please write with photo to Box No 9472

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LONDON Irish bloke, 51, 6', thinking mans. Flat Docklands/ house in Ireland. Seeks 100% normal lady to share fun times etc. Country walks are not a priority. Please write with photo to Box No 9563

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LUXURY Saloon, 31, seeks sporty minister. Please Reply to Box No 9552

MALE, 5'10", 47, brown eyes, body long & dark, South American/ Scandinavian heritage, daughters age, presents good looks, fastened, confident, creative & spiritual, not New Age nor politically correct. Eclectic tastes including melodic rock/pop, some classics & jazz, reading, swimming, films. Stimulating interest in travel. Own business. Requires honesty & consideration. Seeks very feminine female, 30's early 40's, with warmth, good looks & sensitivity. Box No 9517

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MY divorced, dependable, drug-dead, pukka worker, retired early men art, seeks similar special lady, 30s-50s, London. Photo please. Box No 9581

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SENSITIVE Upper Class girl 20s/30s, n/s, who would not necessarily reply straight by eligible, tall Gentleman, n/s slim, with sadly died aged 34, daughter 15. Old enough to be your father but full of go. Listed house, Kent village. Distance unimportant. Total love, loyalty. Everybody would approve. Nobody at all know how you feel. Box No 9484

SKI with me! Tall, dark, n/s, but definitely handsome, blue-eyed, fair-haired young boy, I know because my mummy told me so. 40 odd years on, family raised, divorced, I live, drink, play, ski in the Alps with a friend in a similar situation. The reason for this ad is that after a few bottles of wine we were discussing the merits of the sheep on the Alps. Please move the chalet & be an Hunny! Please Reply to Box No 9575

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SUCCESSFUL M.D., single, 41, good looking, tall, warm, amusing, travelled, many interests, great lifestyle. WLTM very attractive, bright, slim, stylish lady, 20's/30's to share life's little adventures in London & abroad. Photo please. Ex 9567

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TONY WRIGHT

As the director of Kew, Professor Sir Ghillean Prance not only has a house and garden on Kew Green, he also has the run of the 288 acres of the Royal Botanic Gardens

At the back of an orderly Kew

ME AND MY GARDEN: GHILLEAN PRANCE

Soon after Professor Sir Ghillean Prance became the director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, nearly ten years ago, he decided to make changes to the house and garden on Kew Green which come with the job.

To transform the garden from one of straight lines to a more curvaceous affair, with a tantalising secret area at the far end, meant moving an American smoke tree *(Cotinus obovatus)*, which happened to be the first woody plant ever micro-propagated at Kew and had historical significance.

The curator of Kew gardens was horrified: the plant would die if moved, he said — they do, usually — but Sir Ghillean, whose quiet, professorial air masks steely determination, insisted the plant be moved, although he now admits to being nervous about it. The plant survived.

Sir Ghillean is a working botanist, although his ambassadorial, administrative and fundraising roles sometimes threaten to overwhelm this. Most days he is at his lab in the herbarium at Kew, working on the taxonomy and geography of Amazonian plants, and writing a field guide to the region.

Taxonomy has been a Kew speciality since the garden's inception, and today involves studying herbarium specimens as well as the more 20th-century business of examining DNA for better classification of plants — yes, these are the people who make a gardener's life a misery by revising plant names constantly. "I'm afraid we do have to change names sometimes, but it's so that, in the longer term, we get better and more stable classification," Sir Ghillean says.

Plant classification is like breathing to Sir Ghillean, whose earliest memories are of walking on the Isle of Skye, where his family lived, picking heathers and cotton grasses and observing them at home. When he was nine, the family moved to Gloucestershire and he began pressing specimens. His interest attracted help and encouragement from three maiden aunts, Hilda, Gertrude and Dora: two of them amateur botanists and the other an amateur gardener.

From his aunts he learnt the basics which were built on by his next mentor: his housemaster at Malvern, who would sweep the young Prance and three of his mates off to botanise and learn the rudiments of natural history in every spare moment. Guy Charteris, a family friend, continued Prance's education in the holidays and took him regularly to Slimbridge, near Gloucester, founded and run by Mr Charteris's friend Sir Peter Scott.

Oxford University was followed by a tour of botanical jobs around the world, including Brazil, where Sir Ghillean consolidated his speciality: Amazonian plants.

His own garden at Kew is English rather than exotic, with French doors — framed by sweet-smelling, winter-flowering abeliophyllum and wisteria — opening on to a terrace and a large lawn almost enclosed by borders.

However, if Sir Ghillean wants to use the French doors and the ground-floor rooms he has to book them in advance, because he has given the bottom floor of his house to the botanic garden for meetings and events. The garden, too, is used for official entertaining and his only truly private area is a small roof terrace.

"We run the house and garden like an embassy," he says, adding that his wife, Anne, had to give up her teaching job to be a "hostess for Kew". Among other jobs, Lady Prance is in charge of the flower arrangements, which dot the house every day of the year. The flowers come from the Prances's garden, unless in mid-winter.

Terraces beside the house sprout luxuriant moss and thyme — an effect not really approved of by the gardener, who maintains the area, but Sir Ghillean stands by his desired informal approach.

At the far end of the garden, a wall and a thick screen of trees and shrubs makes the boundary with the botanic garden; and, under a vast chestnut, a carpet of crocus lights up the ground in spring.

From there, a camellia walk leads into the main garden in front of the house. Sir Ghillean inherited a garden of straight lines with one vast border put down to large shrubs and small trees, and the other mostly herbaceous. He has evened out the two plantings, introduced curving edges to the beds, and brought the two beds to meet each other at the far end of the lawn, giving the impression of a secret garden beyond. Spears of iris leaves, planted in huge numbers, contrast with the dramatic jagged leaves of hybrid peonies mixed with phlox at the front of the borders, while magnolias, pampas grass, cotinus and *Crambe cordifolia*, among other plants, provide seasonal interest.

A vegetable garden of nearly half an acre gives produce for the Prances' official entertaining. The irregular-shaped walled garden, with a greenhouse that has seen better days, is worked by a gardener, who shares the produce.

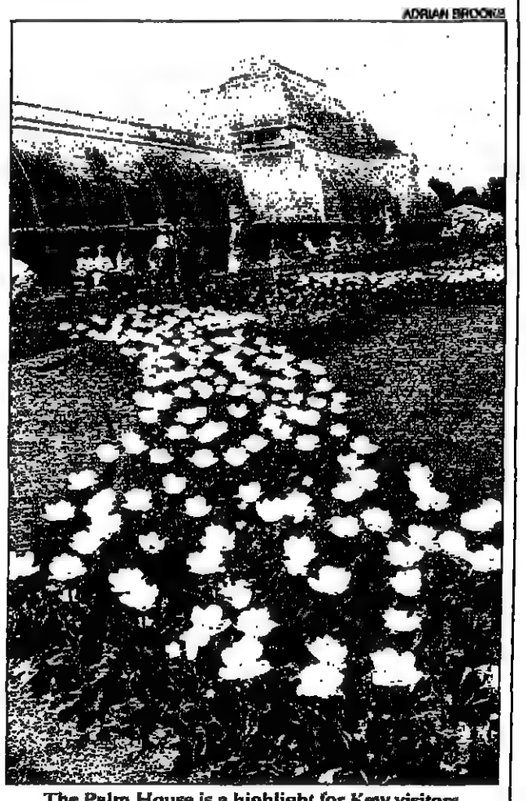
Grapes for the table and a few pot plants for the house come from the greenhouse. A netted area supplies loganberries, raspberries, gooseberries strawberries and other soft fruit. Peaches and nectarines are grown in a cage (grey squirrels are a problem). All the basics, from carrots to potatoes, are there alongside aubergines, peppers, tomatoes and the red of ruby chard.

Sir Ghillean is a countryman at heart and Kew is a near-perfect *rus in urbe*: 288 acres of trees, flowers and glasshouses, and only 40 minutes from the West End. "I can walk out into the garden on a summer night and almost always see a badger," he says.

For a real *rus* the Prances have a retreat in Dorset, though they get there only one weekend in five. "Bay and holly grow there as weeds," he says, "and when I saw what these were selling for at Wakehurst Place [Kew's cousin in Sussex, also under his aegis] I thought I could make my fortune and retire."

JANE OWEN

ADRIAN BROOKS



The Palm House is a highlight for Kew visitors

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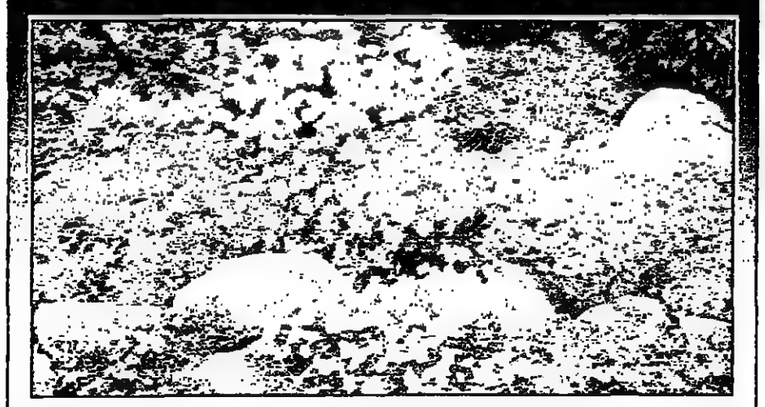

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CHANGING TIMES

Led up a garden path

Stephen Anderton explains how to create the perfect walkway

Most gardeners will admit that they set plants too close together and have to move them apart later. Most of us also make paths too narrow, but instead of being able to dig up and move them, we stick with the problem.

So how wide should a path be? It depends partly on your style of gardening. If you like the edges of your paths to be perpetually softened by lava flows of foliage and colour, you must make allowance for the plants' territory. To be generous, you should allow 18in of space on either side for serious foliar spillage. When a path has planting on both sides, that means about 3ft of paving is already taken up by plants' even before you set foot on it.

A herring-bone pattern helps to enhance a path's progress

Relaying a path sounds expensive, but it is the right way to proceed. You will never regret spending money on generously proportioned paths, because they will always look right when the planting has developed. Never think that a small modern house has to have thin little paths.

If you look at photographs of the gardens designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens early in the 20th century, you will see broad 10ft and 12ft runways of York stone paving set along the front of his substantial Edwardian houses. They looked bald, plain and unnecessarily dominant. But once the planting was mature — the way we see those gardens today — the paths seem to be just the right width.

Allow 18in of space on either side for plant spillage

Wouldn't it be cheaper to lay a narrower snaky path and leave alternate bays of soil on either side for the planting? Well yes, but the effect is not the same. To give the sense of a path being a comfortable, gracious complement to a house, you need to know it is there in a clear, strong line, even if it is partially disguised by plants.

So, how wide should a path be? Well, think of a path as a multiple of people-widths: realistically, at least two people-widths. This means at least 4ft 6in to 5ft wide, plus any space for plant spillage. If that seems too costly, remember that any space in between people-widths is a waste. Doors and gates can trick you into making paths the same width, whereas a path leading to and from a door can usefully be made either narrower or wider.

Clear, strong lines give a sense of belonging

A path's sense of progress can be enhanced or diminished by the pattern of its paving. Patterns which use a forward linear arrangement of paving or bricks will exaggerate the length of the path. Transverse patterns will help to strengthen the feeling of width.

With grass paths, it makes sense to relate the width to your mower's width. A 5ft-wide path that could be mown by a 2ft mower in three passes with an adequate overlap would make perfect sense. But, while it would be wrong to design your garden around your present lawn mower, it would be perverse to ignore it.

Single person-width grass paths can produce various problems. They offer only one fixed route with a wheelbarrow, for instance, and, if you spend a few days barrowing manure or compost up and down the garden every winter, that will lead to concentrated wear and tear problems. Such compaction and baldness is hard to put right.

Proportions change once the plants grow

A double-path through meadow grass usually means at least 8ft of mowing width, which can be a lot of grass to cut unless you have a ride-on machine. It also starts to look slightly fairway-ish. You may prefer to live with the intimacy of a single-width path, and keep to hard surfaces when it is wet.

Paths wide enough for more than two people start to become open spaces as much as they are paths, especially if they are short. Arrange their dimensions to give you the openness you need, and remember that the longer the path the narrower it will seem, even if it is 8ft-9ft wide.

GARDEN PICTURE LIBRARY

The path's width depends on your gardening style

■ Cut back ivy and vigorous creepers, so that winds (or snow) do not pull them down.

■ Erect training wires on walls for climbers and fruit trees. Do not set the wires so close to the wall that pushing string behind the wire to tie in plants becomes tricky.

■ Pot up or replant hippeastrums (amaryllis) in a soil-based compost such as John Innes No. 2, and keep fairly dry until growth starts.

■ Bulbs dried off and saved from last year will need fresh soil around the existing root system, whereas new bulbs may have no roots at all. Even though the flower appears first, the flower stem will require watering to develop. Serious watering only starts when leaves develop.

■ Hybrid tea and floribunda roses can have weak or crossing growth removed now, and any long, unbalanced stems likely to cause windrock can be shortened. Leave the final pruning until later, so that young shoots are not encouraged to break until the warmer weather.

■ An early crop of broad beans may be sown now in individual pots in a cold frame or cold greenhouse. No heat is needed, but watch for hungry mice.

هكذا من الإصل

The biggest room in the house

Jane Owen finds an ideal mix of outdoor and indoor living

MARIANNE MAJERUS

A vast Monica Young terracotta pot provides the focal point in the garden. The sound of running water helps the owners to alleviate the stress of modern living

Most trust are set up to protect old, grand or large gardens. A notable exception is Turn End at Haddenham, Buckinghamshire, which is to be protected by a trust to cultivate the garden, and the houses integral to it, for posterity and to keep it open to the public, even after the death of the couple who now own it. The trustees will probably include Jane Brown, the garden writer and historian, who is writing a book about Turn End to be published next year.

The garden and the three surrounding houses were designed and built in the mid-Sixties as an integral unit by the architect Peter Aldington and his wife Margaret. It was a different approach to the traditional one of making a garden relate to an existing house.

The living spaces, mostly two storeys high, and a separate office fold around three sides of the courtyard garden, whose fourth side is a creamy coloured "wychert" wall — local clay puddled with straw with an arch pierced through to more garden.

Just off the living area is a courtyard with a pond surrounded by a cool green planting of ferns and huge moss-covered stones, ivy and the large overhanging ash trees. The gentle trickle of water dominates and the terracotta flooring throughout unites the two areas.

At one end of the living space is the Aldingtons' bed, flanked on one side by a vast Swiss cheese plant, which covers one wall and is lit by a concealed well of natural light. A glass door on the wall opposite the courtyard garden leads through to the largest area of garden, where a vast Monica Young terracotta pot acts as an eyecatcher. The house and garden seem to ebb and flow together.

This is classic commuter-belt country, and Turn End was designed to give respite from the stresses of life. There was, however, some stress in its building. When the Aldingtons bought the plot in 1964, Mrs Aldington, who at the time could not walk because of painful arthritis, had to build the footings for the entire building. She is convinced that it was this effort that got her back on her feet.

On the terrace outside the living room was a young walnut tree which had to be removed. That was replanted near the drive and the hole which remained inspired the pond, so giving birth to the courtyard garden.

The Aldingtons completed the house in six months and camped in it without plumbing, windows or doors for two years while they began work on the garden. The garden was created without a plan but bamboo poles were used as marking rods to give a working form. Sometimes the rods were left in place for a couple of seasons and moved about until the Aldingtons settled on the right position and shape for beds and trees.

Large trees were planted around the plot to obscure all the neighbouring houses, and planting positions were staked out with long poles and a great deal of "left a bit, right a bit".

Outside the door at the back of the living room, stone steps lead past a jungle of tree peonies, bamboos, birches and perennial planting through to a lawn with several sweeps of island beds packed with drifts of everything from ornamental grasses to iris to specialist sages.

The level rises at the back of some of the far beds and, as you turn to look back at the main house and the two others built by the Aldingtons, little is visible in late summer. In winter, the strange outlines of the Mexican-style buildings are revealed. Although the roof tiles are typical of the area, they are used with whitewashed walls to give a hint of the exotic.

In the main garden a blackbird splashes about in a birdbath at the centre of a sunken hexagonal garden. Originally, this was the sage garden — Dawn Meadows, the gardener at Turn End, who lives in the garden cottage and works here four days a week, is a sage specialist. Today, there are more specialist pelargoniums than sages in the sage garden.

At the back of the hexagonal garden is the old coach house, now the potting shed, and, through an arch at the back of the open-fronted coach house, there is a framed view of a huge pot, once a dough-mixing bowl from an old bakery. Around the mixing bowl is a formal box-edge parterre filled with 1,000 pale blue sage, *Salvia farinacea*.

From the living room, the little curved arch through the wychert wall of the courtyard garden leads to a walled gravel garden. Its raised railway-sleeper beds are packed with sunlovers which refuse to thrive in the shadier main garden. At the far end, a cool raised pergola is smothered in kiwi, one of which has produced leaves about 16in long.

● *Turn End, Townside, Haddenham, Buckinghamshire (01844 291833), is open to groups by appointment only. The following dates are public open days: April 12, May 4, Sept 13, and Wednesdays in June*

Peter Aldington and Dawn Meadows

STEPHEN ANDERTON'S GARDEN ANSWERS

Q Last year I was given two clivias. Both flourished, and one which has two fans of foliage flowered. The other only has one fan of foliage. What do I do with the new fans to ensure they flower? — H. Robinson, Camberley, Surrey.

A Clivias flower when they are ready. A single fan of leaves, when strong enough, will throw up a flower stem and its cluster of orange trumpets. As time goes by, new fans will form at its base, and when they are big enough, they too will flower. But in the interim, the first fan will still bloom every year. There is no need to take off the side fans to keep the original flowering.

More to the point, the new shoots will flower the sooner for not being disturbed. In ten years you will have a clump over a foot across producing a dozen flower stems. So just leave your plants alone. Keep them drying during the winter, and give them tomato feed during the summer growing period — 50F/10C or just under is warm enough in winter. Pot them on only when the roots have become really tight in the pot. It does not matter if they show on the surface of the compost.

Q In preparation for moving to a new house I am collecting seedlings and cuttings from my garden. I have a holly seedling from our berry-bearing tree, but is there any way to tell if the seedling will be female and bear berries, before it matures enough to do so? — E. New, New Barnet, Herts.

A It is impossible to tell. If you want berries in the new garden, plant a known female form. Look at the neighbouring gardens or woodland. If there are berry-bearing hollies there, then there must also be a male or males about. So you could probably get away without planting a male in your own garden. Save the space for something else, or let your male holly be a relatively small one, such as the slow growing "hedgehog holly", *Ilex aquifolium* 'Ferox', which also has spines on the flat surfaces of the leaves. Both the golden and silver variegated forms of the hedgehog holly are also male.

● *Write to: Garden Answers, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. Advice is offered without legal responsibility. The Times regrets that any enclosures cannot be returned.*

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هكذا من الإصل

Stephen Anderton has high praise for a winning combination: the lightweight ladder

One small stepladder for mankind

It's true that the simplest inventions are always the best. I give hearty thanks to the inventors of the lightweight combination ladder-and-stepladder. They are the best thing in gardens since lawnmowers.

There are people who insist on sticking with their separate ladders and steps. "Give you a hand to prune that apple? Of course I will." And off we go with secateurs and bowsaw and some heavy wooden pre-war steps.

When we get there, the steps are inevitably not quite tall enough without a high-wire act, so it's back to the garage for the long aluminium ladders. We march along like bas-relief Ancient Egyptians working on a pyramid.

And then we try to poke the thing up into the branches to get at the offending branch. The ladder eventually sticks up 10ft out of the top of the tree. I sigh, and long for my combination ladder.

The beauty of it is that it is so light and adaptable. With the simplest ones, you can put your arm through up to the shoulder, and still walk along with a handful of tools unhindered.

When you get to your hedge or tree, the two halves of the ladder either open up and lock to form an "A", or slide against each other and extend to form a modest ladder.

It pays to have a yard of thin rope fastened to the top of garden ladders, so you can quickly tie a loop around a branch for extra security. It should be fat enough to untie easily, and strong enough not to snap if it is put to the test in a wobble.

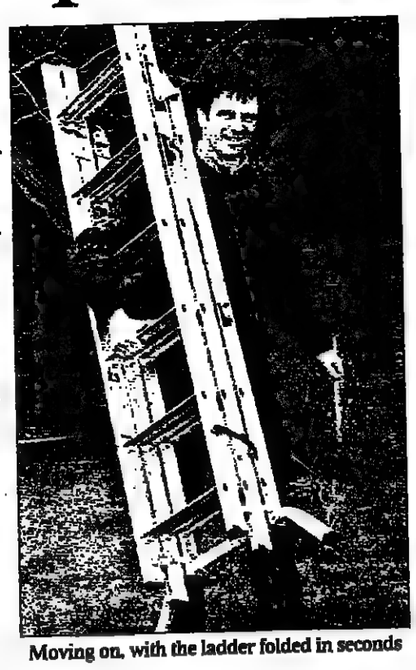
I like that quarter-inch-thick blue polypropylene rope used to secure tarpaulins to the back of lorries, most commonly seen lying in frustratingly useful lengths in the fast lane of motorways, and frustratingly useless little lengths on Scottish beaches.

The feet of ladders are always most likely to slip in wet weather. So wedge at least one foot against something immovable. There is even a little plastic gripper plate complete with angled teeth, produced by Laddersure, to prevent ladder feet from slipping on soft surfaces.

On soft ground, I stamp on the ladder as I step up, to make sure there is no unfortunate slip into a mole run just as I get to the top.

The clever combination ladders have three sections, — two to make the locked "A", and a third to slide up from the "A". This gives you useful extra height, and something to hang on to or tie tools on to if you are going to be up ladders for half a day at a time.

There is always the temptation to go higher than you should, and a rope around a branch is always sensible. Some models like the ABRU 4-Way have extra-wide bolt-on stabiliser feet, though the increase in size can cause storage difficulties.



Moving on, with the ladder folded in seconds

The safest way to trim tall hedges is from a plank set across two ladders or trestles. Aluminium trestles such as the Henchman range are adjustable for uneven ground and easy to move, and there are models for hedges up to 15ft high. Here you can work in comfort and swing the shears with ease — just don't step back.

But there are times when you have to use a ladder, and lean it into the hedge to get at some awkward bit. This is when things can get really wobbly. You can never be sure — like the man lodged in a crevasse — when you will slip forward a few inches. And then the ladder feet may slip backwards and, well, it's down the crevasse with you, electric shears and all.

So jam the ladder feet in firmly or get someone to hold it for you. And tie a board to the top of the ladder, so that instead of putting all your weight on the ends of the rails, it is evenly distributed over a whole area of hedge.

The hardest ladder-work of all is cutting the tops of wide hedges. Time was you could hold on with one hand and lean out with a trimmer in the other, to cut the furthest parts. Not so now. In order for power shears to operate, you must use two hands. It is safer for the novice, but makes the job far harder and slower.

At Levens Hall in Cumbria there are some tall old beech hedges. Over the years, a clever mechanism has been developed there to make clipping easier. On top of the hedge, where no one sees, planks have been tied in a running length into the top forks of the trees, so you can sit up there and clip with ease.

No doubt the health and safety people would object to such simple ingenuity, and impose a more proper and expensive solution involving enough aluminium scaffolding to repoint Big Ben. We at home, at least, are still allowed to employ our common sense and take reasonable, sensible risks.

LADDER FILE

- B&Q and Homebase sell ABRU 4-Way combination aluminium ladders for £90, and 3-Way ladders for £35.
- Henchman Trestles are available from Haygate Engineering, Manor Farm, Hannington, Tadley, Hants RG26 5TZ (01635 299847), from £324.
- The Laddersure grip is available from Laddersure, PO Box 155, Winchester SO21 1YQ (01962 712921), £12.50 plus £1.55 p&p.

JOHN McLELLAN

Stephen Anderton uses a combination ladder for an awkward spot

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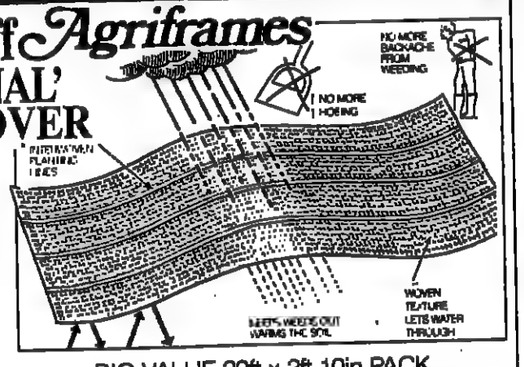

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"The trouser-clad bottom half of him was still outside, but the naked pink rest of him was inside my kitchen"

Just breaking in a friendship

LIFE AND SOUL

JANE SHILLING

It would be hard to say, really, which I dread more — being burgled, or being locked out. A good deal of my adult life has been spent in a state of high anxiety, in anticipation of one or the other.

There have been brushes with both. There was the time I was filling up the car with windscreen washer and left my keys on a sloping bit of engine from which they slid, in dreamlike slow motion, straight into the drain over which I had (naturally) parked.

Fear of being shut out led directly to the burglars who, finding one summer night that I had left the door on the latch, understandably considered themselves invited in. Evidently a nice class of burglar, they came upstairs but refrained from entering our rooms — their black hearts softened, perhaps, by the notice on Alexander's door that reads "Privit. Everyone keep out ecsept Panda". Really, considering how vague and hopeless I am, we have got off quite lightly.

Until this weekend, when Kit came to stay. He was passing through London on his way to a course. In return for the use of my exquisitely uncomfortable spare bed, he would take me out and show me a good time at the Café Rouge, Blackheath. Hard to resist, really. So I gave him a quick rundown of the peculiarities of the house — don't open the fridge more than a crack or all the milk bottles will fall out; don't worry about thumping noises in the night, it is only Alexander rearranging the furniture; don't forget to double-lock the front door. And here is a spare key. Please don't lose it.

"Yup, yup, got all that," he said, alertly. "Now, are you ready for some dinner?" I was. I put on my nice new chinchilla-trimmed Alberta Ferretti coat (a bit overdone for the Café Rouge, possibly, but Kit is a great noticer of women's clothes).

"*Very* nice," said he, bang on cue, as I showed him out and closed the door. I turned to double-lock it; except the key wouldn't go in.

"Kit," I said, "you haven't left your key in the lock, have you?" "Yes!" he said, brightly. "Good place to keep it, you see. So I don't lose it." "Very conscientious, I'm sure, only the thing is, it means I can't open the front door. Which is the only means of access to the house."

It was dark and cold and raining hard all over my new chinchilla. "Never mind," said Kit, shifting the blame for this debacle with suspicious adroitness. "We'll just have to break in. What fun. Windows?" Locked, I said. "What about the back?" "Twelve-foot trellis covered in very prickly roses." "Just like the Sleeping Beauty," said Kit, grinning. "Come on, there must be one bit where there aren't roses. And if we've got to smash a window, it'd be better if we do it at the back."

"Well," I said, in a furious sulk by now, "the fence between me and Olive next door has got honeysuckle and jasmine." "There are you are, then," said Kit. "Lead on."

I rapped smartly at Olive's brass leprechaun door knocker. "Oo is it?" said a small, alarmed voice. "It's Jane," I said. "I'm ever so sorry, but I've locked myself out."

Clanking of chains, grinding of bolts. The door opened. Olive looked out. She was wearing her petticoat but not her teeth. "Ooh my Gawd," she said when she saw Kit and banged the door shut. We waited.

After a bit it opened again and there was Olive, resplendent in cherry red sweater and teeth. "Come in darling," she said. "You'll be needing a ladder." "Let me," said Kit, who is nicely brought up. "Hands off!" said Olive, wrestling it past her knick-knacks. "There you are," she said. "I'm going to watch Cilla now."

Through the fence, we could see that I had left open a tiny window in the kitchen. "You'd better give me a leg-up," I said. "Certainly not," said Kit. "If anyone's going over the top, it's me."

Kit is a fine figure of a man, if you like that sort of thing, but running to flesh. He took off his jacket and his waistcoat and his old college tie and handed them to me. Then he swarmed up the ladder and sprang over the trellis, landing on the other side with a fearful crash (I had forgotten to mention the old tin bath which I keep meaning to plant up with herbs . . .).

There didn't seem much point in standing around holding his coat like a second in a duel, so I went indoors. "Let's go and see how he's getting on," said Olive after a bit.

Kit's shirt hung neatly from a rosebush. The trouser-clad bottom half of him was still outside, but the naked pink rest of him was inside my kitchen. He seemed to be caught by his middle in the window. Clearly, if I ever got back inside my house I should be using his torso as a novelty saucepan rack for quite some time.

Olive and I could think of nothing useful to say. We went back indoors. Eventually, there was a well-bred tap at the door. It was Kit, smiling the modest smile of a hero. Insufferable.

"All done," he said. "Olive, thank you so much for all your help." And he gave her a huge kiss.

I went round the next day with a box of Milk Tray. "Now, you listen to me darling," said Olive. "I'm 85 and I know what's what. You want to be a bit sweeter to that young man of yours or he'll be off. And he's one in a million, he is. Lovely manners, ever so handsome, and look how he got you out of all that trouble you was in last night . . ."

Determined to go out with a bang

There is a growing trend for original and unusual funerals. **Damian Whitworth** reports

She touched the lives of millions. Now Diana, Princess of Wales is changing the British way of death. The style in which she was laid to rest and the location — a tranquil, wooded isle on her family's estate — have inspired many of those preparing for the end to break with convention.

Of course, unusual exits are not new. Sir Charles Irving, the former MP for Cheltenham, amused the nation and horrified many in his constituency by insisting that his ashes be sprinkled over the town from a plane. The funeral last year of Evan Sampson, a former miner from South Wales, was conducted in the local pub with his coffin perched on top of the pool table. "He loved a pint," explained his widow, Megan. And last week William Annetts, a colonel-in-chief in the Sealed Knot Society, which re-enacts Civil War battles, went out with a bang, his mortal remains fired towards the heavens in Berkshire by three 17th-century cannon.

These were all eccentric departures, but the funeral industry is now reporting a mass move away from the straightforward crematorium funeral. Many just want to make their services more personal. Others are looking for their own place in the woods.

"Diana's funeral had a big impact," says Sandy Wickenden, of Service Corporation International. "Most people will arrange perhaps two or three funerals in their lifetime. It is an infrequent event for them, so there's no blueprint.

"Diana's funeral gave them ideas. It proved that they could have modern music and old-fashioned music; that they didn't need to have just the liturgy, but that other people could speak and children could participate."

The effect has been to accelerate a gradual relaxation of the style of funerals that the funeral industry says it has been trying to achieve for some time. "We have been working towards people realising that they can take more control. You don't have to have a half-hour service. You can have an hour or an hour and a half. People can take their time and do what they want," says Ms Wickenden. "Where funeral services have gone wrong in the past is in having a pattern. Now we try to make the package fit the person rather than the person fit the package. A funeral fails when it fails to say something significant about a life and the person who died."

At recent funerals she has seen a variety of unusual tributes to the deceased, including the placing of bingo cards and boxing gloves on coffins. "And a pair of stiletto heels. That was for a gentleman."

One man had stipulated that his ashes be launched into the sky in a rocket. "It was like a big firework. That was a bit odd." Service Corporation International claims it will do whatever is asked, within legal limits, even burials at sea.

> A funeral fails in its purpose when it fails to say something about a life and the person who died

However, the biggest phenomenon since the Princess was buried at Althorp has not been the frequency that *Candle in the Wind* is played at services — one company says it is the most popular tune — but the boom in green burials. After the Princess had been interred, the Natural Death Centre in London was inundated with inquiries.

Nicholas Albery, the centre's director, wants to be wrapped in a sheet and buried on a piece of land he owns with an apple tree on top of him. He founded the centre with two others to spread the word about where and how to be buried in a biodegradable cardboard coffin.

The New Natural Death Handbook will even tell you how to build your own coffin. Since the first green graveyard opened in Carlisle in 1993, the industry has been steadily growing and there are now 75 such sites across the country.

The Princess was not buried in a cardboard coffin, but the woodland setting of her grave and its tranquillity caught the public imagination. John Acton provides green burials at Oakfield Wood overlooking the River Stour on the edge of Constable country, near Harwich in Essex. Before last September he would generally sell two plots a week to people wishing to be buried at the site. The week of Diana's funeral he sold 11 and business has remained brisk ever since. Mr Acton hit on the idea of creating a nature reserve burial ground when he found himself with 100 acres of land that were not viable for farming. Bodies are buried in cardboard coffins or shrouds and are not embalmed.

"We try to bury people quickly. The whole point is not to use chemicals," says Mr Acton. The wooden plaque placed on the plot will rot eventually but the tree planted on the spot will become part of a growing broadleaf wood. Those in future generations wanting to find the exact point where great-granddad lies will be able to do so with the aid of an eight-figure Ordnance Survey grid reference.

"We've buried more than 100 people and hundreds more have purchased plots," says Mr Acton, who wants to expand his business to other leafy corners of the country. He says crematoriums waste natural resources.

"It takes a lot of gas to burn someone. This way everyone benefits. This country is desperately short of broadleaf woodland."

He added that there was no chance of anybody else being put into your Oakfield grave because he has sold the land to the Essex Wildlife Trust for £1 while he retains the right to bury people there. At £790 for the full burial, that is cheaper than the £1,000 average cost of a funeral today.

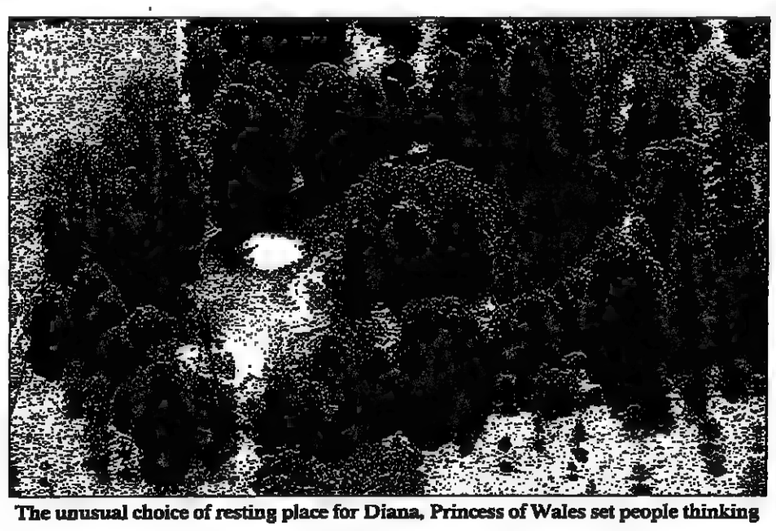
Cost, however, is probably not what has reawakened this desire among those facing death to be returned to the woods that once covered these islands. The motivation is to provide something dignified and fitting and peaceful for all concerned.

One woman, whose husband was buried at Oakfield Wood, wrote to the Natural Death Centre to say that it had worked for her. "We all filled in the grave. The skylarks were singing. When we left I felt almost elated."

● *For information about Oakfield Wood, contact Peter Kincaid, 256 High Street, Dovercourt, Essex CO12 3PA (01255 503456). The Natural Death Centre, 20 Heber Road, London NW2 6AA (0181-208 2853)*

INS NEWS GROUP

The ashes of William Annetts, a colonel-in-chief in the Sealed Knot Society, were fired from three 17th-century cannon by fellow Civil War enthusiasts in Berkshire



The unusual choice of resting place for Diana, Princess of Wales set people thinking

Looking death in the face

Taking children to the mortuary can help them understand the loss of a relative, says **Emma Haughton**

I NEVER imagined I would take my children to see a dead body. Not having looked death full in the face myself, like many adults I had come to see it as something rather fearful, distasteful even. Even so, when my mother-in-law died and I accompanied my husband, Joff, to the mortuary, I was surprised how apprehensive I felt. I wish I could say I found it a positive, even enlightening experience, but I did not; I just felt numb and shocked, and thankful when we left a few minutes later.

So when we returned to the children and Flan, aged four, asked if he could see his gran, I dismissed it, explaining yet again that she couldn't see him or talk to him. He clearly couldn't grasp the reality of death, but I was at a loss how better to describe it. He wanted to see her, he insisted, and during the next hour was unusually persistent.

I began to wonder why I was resisting and asked Joshua, aged six, how he felt. He dropped the air of diffidence he had kept up since hearing that his gran had died, and said he, too, wanted to go. I knew I had to take them.

Flying in the face of my father-in-law's opposition and my husband's uncertainty, we drove back to the mortuary. The closer we got, the more convinced I became that I was doing the right thing: I could not, when it came down to it, see how the reality of death could be any worse than what the boys imagined we were hiding from them. So after a final check that they still wanted to go ahead, we went in.

The children were simply amazing — relaxed, curious, yet respectful, each touching their gran's hand and carefully examining her face. Far from looking worried or scared, they asked questions about how she died and what would happen to her. Zachary, at 18 months, was too young to take in much, but we explained to all three why she was so cold and what would happen to her body at the funeral. They took this in without any sign of distress, and to my immense relief I realised that to them, death was not so much terrible as fascinating, just another part of life's rich tapestry that they were keen to explore.

But there was another, unexpected, bonus to taking the boys. Their easy-going, matter-of-fact attitude to their grandmother's body rubbed off on Joff and I, and transformed our second visit. Joff cried, but he was visibly more at ease than the time before. I found my former shock and discomfort replaced by more of a sense of peace about her death, and although I felt sorry that she had gone, this sadness felt more positive than the oppressive emotions I had battled with before.

Grieving: a family affair

A year on, and I am still certain we did the right thing. The boys showed no signs of being traumatised; the anticipated tears and nightmares never materialised. Flan's incomprehension about death was replaced by a calm acceptance of what had happened to his gran, and I am sure the chance to see her and say goodbye helped all of them to cope with their grief. They certainly missed her — they still do — but they gradually came to terms with their loss without anger, fear or self-pity.

"I look back now and feel sad, but not frightened," said Joshua, when I asked him recently about the visit. "I didn't like my gran dying because I love her, but I was glad I went to see her body. She was cold and dead but it wasn't scary."

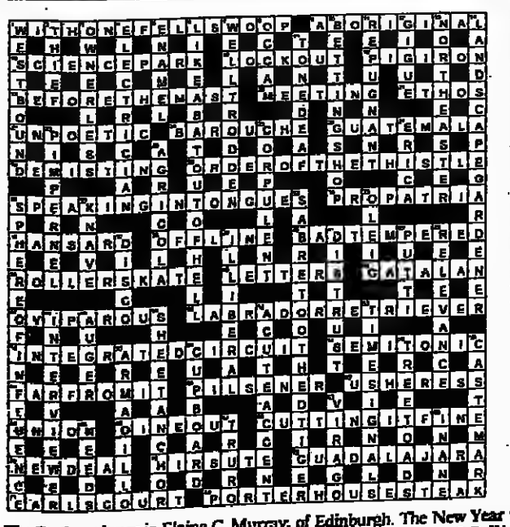
That said, our experience might not work for all families, according to Susan Wallbank, counsellor co-ordinator for Cruse Bereavement Care. "Parents definitely shouldn't drag children who are frightened and screaming along to a mortuary just because they think it would be good for them," she says, warning that some children may be more disturbed by the sight of a dead body than others.

"Sometimes children get upset, especially if the adults are too, but it can be hard to anticipate. Little ones often take it in their stride, whereas older children can become frightened about death and relate it more to themselves."

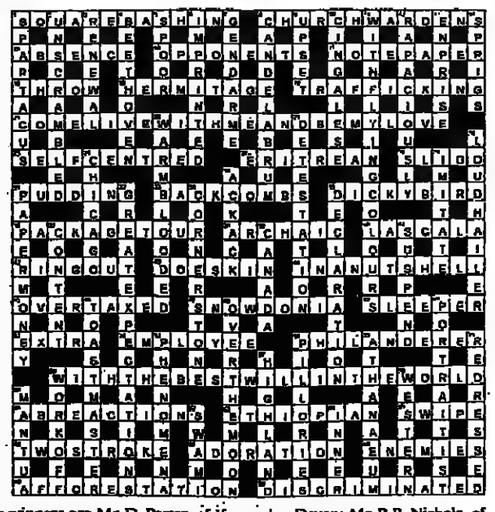
However, the advantage of viewing the body, she says, is that it often dispenses with the need for elaborate explanation, and helps them to accept the reality of what has happened. But it needs to be done carefully. Always go in first, recommends Wallbank, especially if the body has been damaged, so that you can explain to them what to expect.

"When families handle it sensitively, it's unlikely there will be lasting damage," she believes. "It can be an experience of great significance."

SOLUTION TO FESTIVE JUMBO 143



SOLUTION TO NEW YEAR JUMBO 144



The Festive winner is Elaine C. Murray, of Edinburgh. The New Year winners are Mr D. Porter, of Ilfracombe, Devon; Mr R.B. Nichols, of Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex; Douglas Jackson of Manchester; G.R. Ward, of Lancaster, Lancs; Mr A.S. Halley, of Folkestone, Kent; Mrs W.M. Warden, of Coleford, Glos. The Boxing Day Jumbo (142): the further five winners of £100 are W.P.M. Field, of Bishop's Stortford, Herts; P.A. Duesbury, of Barton, Notts; C. O'Brien, of Wolverhampton; John Cox of Salisbury, Wilts; D.S. Perkins, of Gerrards Cross, Bucks.

هكذا من الإصل

KOBAL COLLECTION

Building children's self-esteem figures high in Parent-Link classes. "Feel what it's like for a child to be undermined," the organisation advises

Mum and dad go to school

James Rampton attends a parenting class and finds out how much there is to learn

The logo of Parent-Link, an organisation that runs parenting courses, is a rudimentary drawing of a small child beside the words: "Being a parent is the most important job in the world."

Absolutely. How strange it is, then, that there is no official training for such a crucial occupation.

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, would like to change all this. He would have us all go to parenting school to learn about "parental responsibility", imposing fines on those of us whose children do not make the grade. In a speech to the Preschool Learning Alliance last Wednesday, he suggested teaching parenting skills in school and more consistent use of health visitors. "We need to crack a culture in which parents are often afraid to ask for help because they see it as an admission of failure," he said. But what can a course teach you that good old-fashioned sense cannot? Former Conservative MP Lady Olga Maitland wants to enrol on a course in order to subvert it from within. "I suspect it will be a lot of politically correct claptrap which should be exposed," she said. "Jack Straw is going about it the wrong way. What we ought to be saying is before you have children, make sure you marry and have a good, stable home. This is the basis of parenting."

As a father of two young daughters, it was with a measure of scepticism that I took my place with eight pupils at a Parent-Link class in north London. All were women, although the courses are open to both sexes. The lesson was given by a no-nonsense grandmother called Noemi Berger.

One woman despaired of ever getting her child ready for school on time. Mrs Berger sternly proposed getting tough: "There should be rules. It's time you took control." Another said she was at the end of her tether after constantly battling with her child. Mrs Berger recommended that she make the most of post-row reconciliations.

"When she comes to give you a kiss and a hug, that's your opportunity to talk — not when you are both fighting." This is all sensible stuff, underlying the basic concept that a happy parent means a happy child, that the parents' self-esteem has a direct bearing on the child's.

James Rampton with his daughters

The gathering was a demonstration of that old saw: a problem shared is a problem halved. The parents did seem to gain from the knowledge that the difficulties they were encountering with their children were not in any way freakish — in fact, quite the opposite.

"If I find myself screaming at my kids and saying horrible things to the people I love most, then I stop and say, is this normal, do other people do it? Here I've found out I'm normal," one woman confided. "It's comforting to know you have a common problem. We give each other tools to help communicate with our children, rather than just shout at them."

Another reckoned that "the classes have improved my listening skills. It's also helped me and my husband to be less judgmental; we're not labelling our children so much now. They know I'm trying, so they're trying too." This might seem like the stuff you could find at any coffee morning. This being a north London top-of-the-range parent class it comes at a cost of £160 (some are free to parents — fees courtesy of the local authority). Most participants agreed that the formality of the set-up helps you to focus on the knotty problems of parenting. "It quickly degenerates into mums nattering, otherwise," said one anxious mother.

"The leaflets are helpful," remarked another, handing me *The risk of using labels and humiliating our children*. And paying all that money helps to concentrate the mind no end.

Wendy van den Hende, chief executive of Patent Network, the charitable organisation which runs Parent-Link, emphasised that the aim of the course is "to break patterns. For a lot of parents, their own experiences of being parented were not particularly constructive. What the courses do is allow parents to see what happened to them and translate that into something positive rather than just replicating role models".

She added: "There is a lot taught about self-esteem and communicating with children. People who think that parenting is just common sense tend to get their comeuppance and then learn humility."

Dr Lesley Morrison, a GP and mother of three who has already completed the Parent-Link course, found it so rewarding that she now recommends it to her patients and is trying to have elements of it incorporated into GP training. "Some parenting guides can be very guilt-inducing and academic," she observed, "but the way the course is presented is very experiential. You engage in helpful exercises, some of which encourage you to feel what it's like for a child to be undermined and insecure.

"It's really different from reading a book. I found it very powerful."

Mrs van den Hende is going to discuss her organisation's work with Alun Michael at the Home Office later this month. "A lot of research shows that one of the biggest factors in delinquent behaviour is poor parenting," she declared. "This subject is very high on the political agenda now. It's led by a personal interest from Tony Blair, who's very keen on the family.

"At Parent Network, we're into preventive work. You need to learn how to be a parent before you have a crisis with a teenage child." Parent-Link is also trying to involve fathers more. It plans to organise classes in venues such as rooms above pubs and sports centres, where more men are found.

Mrs Berger concurred. "We can't compel people to come to classes like this; but if we could, I think we'd save a lot of trouble in later years. It's a long-term investment. It's about raising better parents."

Which is something even Lady Olga Maitland could not argue with.

● *Parent Network, 2 Winchester House, 11 Cranmer Road, London SW9 6EJ (0171-735 1214)*

So much for the CV – does your face fit?

'Personology' claims that measuring facial features can help you to choose the right career, says **Terri Paddock**

We do it every day. A man sits across from us on the train and we study him. There is something about his eyes or his thin upper lip, and even though mum warned us not to judge a book by its cover, we do just that. The tendency to link facial features to personality has even crept into our language — "stiff upper lip", "highbrow", "nose for news". There may just be a nugget of truth in them.

For Naomi Tickle, author of *It's All in the Face*, these are the rudiments of personology (the study of persons). The science was developed in the 1930s by a Californian judge who noticed a pattern in the characteristics of the witnesses and defendants paraded before him. Since then, studies of thousands of individuals have validated the judge's observations of more than 70 facial features and behavioural traits with up to 92 per cent accuracy.

Now Ms Tickle, a Somerset native who has lived in California for 30 years, is bringing her practice to this country at the Personology Centre, at Morley College in London. She claims that personology can help identify traits, acting as an invaluable tool for planning careers, improving relationships and, ultimately, finding one's purpose in life. Given that most of us spend 40 years of our lives at work, it is not surprising that 75 per cent of Ms Tickle's clients come to her for career guidance.

I and two other guinea pigs went along to be measured. With a plastic ruler and collection of grids, she took more than 100 precise readings from each of us — face, skull, hands, legs and even the width of a single hair. Did you know that if you have short legs, you will always be active? Or that if you can see light through the gaps in your fingers when you hold your flattened hand up, you are philosophical?

The proportion of every feature tells a story, particularly the landscape of your face, the right side of which, according to Ms Tickle, is most influenced by your father's traits and the left side by your mother's. Wide faces are natural leaders, narrow faces like to function behind the scenes. Close-set eyes focus on details, wide-set ones look for the bigger picture. A full upper lip shows you are a real talker while a billowing lower one means you are generous.

As she reeled off our characteristics, Ms Tickle emphasised: "None of this is negative. It's just who you are." It is all in how you direct your traits and react to those of others. So what if you are cursed with a long upper lip — ie, you have little concern for personal appearance and a Saharan sense of humour? While 80 per cent of our physical and personality features are inherited, Ms Tickle insists we always have a choice in how we use them.

Can it identify our ideal careers? Definitely not, according to Alexis Hallam, an occupational psychologist. "Personality is not the only indicator for a job," she says. "A great deal is also determined by your capability, your values and motivation."

Mr Hallam believes personology is a dangerous notion, particularly in job interviews: "I'm sure she [Ms Tickle] can make some uncannily true intuitions from a person's face, but I don't think that is actually about getting it right."

John Ward, 80, portrait artist, has been studying and drawing faces for 65 years including the Queen, and Diana, Princess of Wales.

Although he is fascinated by the subtle workings of the human face, "the most miraculous theatre in the world", he asserts that it "betrays almost nothing" about personality.

We guinea pigs had felt sceptical, too, but left with a grudging respect for personology's credentials. Ms Tickle fed our measurements and traits into a computer that matched them with our most compatible careers. "I was amazed at how accurate it was," said Chris Mogridge, while Oliver Roll was intrigued by the possibilities: "The next time I meet a girl in a bar, I'll check out her lips."

● *For details of UK courses contact 01233 840720. Personal consultations £65. Postal profiles cost £35 and require three clear photographs plus three strands of hair. The entire forehead should be visible in at least one photograph, and another should be a side view in which an ear is exposed. Call 001 415 965 9540 e-mail: naomitickl@aol.com*

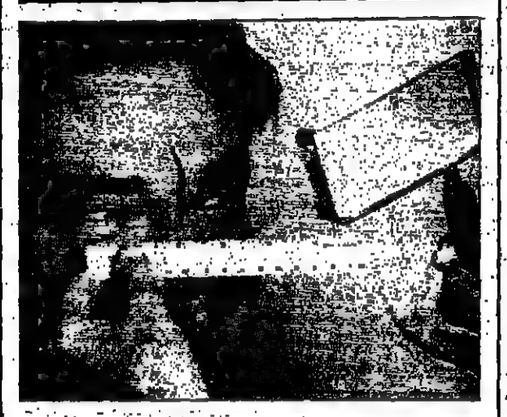
● *It's All In The Face is available from the Occultique Bookshop (0160-627727) in Northampton.*

CASE STUDY 1 CHRIS MOGRIDGE

PETER NICHOLLS

Age: 31.
Actual job: Credit analyst for NatWest Markets.
Traits: Narrow face (better support than leader), coarse hair (loves outdoors), sharp features (eye for detail), rounded forehead (works well with people), low-set eyebrows (affable), close-set eyes (low tolerance), lines beneath eyes (writing talent), full lower lip (generous).
Career matches: Writer, management analyst, purchasing agent, criminalist, personolgist.
Chris's verdict: Analysis is 90 per cent accurate. Has been a frustrated writer for years. Management analyst and other careers are similar to his new job which he enjoys.

CASE STUDY 2 OLIVER ROLL



Age: 32.
Actual job: Marketing director, Microsoft Network.
Traits: Fine hair (prefers indoor pursuits), wide face (leader), sloping forehead (quick-thinking), curved eyebrows (good at organisation), eyelids covered (analytical), rounded nose (seeks news), full lips (expressive, generous), square chin (enjoys debate).
Career matches: Sales and marketing, politics, massage, social work, personnel.
Oliver's verdict: Analysis 80 per cent accurate. In addition to current career, has dreamt of being a politician. Other suggestions are too "soft".

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Dogs with a nose for trouble

Finding drugs and bombs is all part of a day's work for some former pets. Russell Jenkins reports

Milo and Corporal Jason Kirby on a training run

STEPHEN DAVISON

Milo, one of the graduates of the Defence Animal Centre, with his handler Corporal Jason Kirby, prepare for their next assignment — mission unknown

Milo, a brown springer spaniel, was bred to sit in front of the fire and to wag his tail, looking lovable whenever it was time for walkies. He was born a pet. Now things are different.

After being adopted by the Ministry of Defence, Milo spends his days patrolling the streets of Northern Ireland with Corporal Jason Kirby, using his highly developed senses to sniff out caches of explosives, guns and ammunition.

Milo is a service dog, one of the hundreds of animals working for the military from Bosnia to the Falklands. As well as saving countless military and civilian lives, he and his fellow service dogs are estimated to have helped to find 250,000kg of explosive, 500,000 rounds of ammunition and 27,000 weapons around the world, as well as 5,000 bombs in Northern Ireland alone.

The dogs are all honourable graduates of the Defence Animal Centre, an establishment run jointly by the Royal Army Veterinary Corps and the RAF — a sort of Sandhurst for unwanted mutts and strays.

The entrance to the centre is hidden behind a housing estate north of Melton Mowbray, in the East Midlands. Beyond the Nissen huts and barbed wire fence, rows of kennels housing dozens of barking dogs give a clue to the camp's main purpose. These 355 acres of rolling countryside are an adventure playground where would-be guard dogs spend six weeks learning the kind of bared-teeth aggression necessary to deter insurgents.

The dogs being trained for the more sophisticated work of sniffing out explosives, stolen money and drugs, finding wounded servicemen or tracking enemies across difficult terrain, are mostly recruited from the gun dog breeds.

Warrant Officer Mark Butler, the head of training in the canine division, admits that most dogs could do the work, physically. But bloodhounds are deemed too noisy and are prone to sickness; the RAF is unwilling to take a chance on Rottweilers and, well, "a poodle wouldn't be much of a deterrent to an aggressor," he says.

Most of the recruits arrive as unwanted domestic pets. Others are donated by the RSPCA, Battersea Dogs' Home and other animal rescue centres. For many, the services offer the last chance before being put down.

Milo, for example, could no longer be kept by his owners after the birth of triplets in the family. The MoD seemed a perfect new home for him to indulge his passion in life — playing fetch, and hide-and-seek.

At the start of his three-month basic training, each dog is introduced to his personal handler, who spends the first days establishing mutual trust and friendship, and also authority.

Obedience training is by-word of command. "Dogs are basically wolves," a senior officer says. "The training establishes who is leader of the pack. There has to be a boss. Once the dog knows who is leader, they can get on with their lives."

On the training ground, Private Andy Harland, aged 21, from Middlesbrough, puts Annie, a two-year-old German shepherd being trained as a MoD Police dog, through her paces.

In the simulated village of two-storey houses, with a telephone box and old cars, Annie fetches and searches, tail wagging furiously, eyes bright and alert. She learns how to sniff out illicit caches. Somewhere in the camp are the "training tools" — several hundred thousand pounds in shredded notes and a heavily guarded stock of class-A drugs which are introduced to the dogs in containers.

> 'In Northern Ireland alone, service dogs are estimated to have helped to find at least 5,000 bombs'

The sniffer dogs may one day be employed by Customs and Excise to hunt drugs, or by the Army in Northern Ireland looking for arms and bombs.

During training the dogs will be given "toys" — a piece of plastic tubing containing a few grams of illegal drugs — which will then be taken away and hidden in the simulated village.

The tasks will become increasingly difficult, until the dogs can find the drugs almost anywhere.

Colonel Julia Kneale, who presides over the veterinary hospital, is anxious to dispel the myth about dogs and drugs. Their dogs are most definitely not turned into addicts for the purpose of making them good searchers, she says. They do it because they want to please.

Once a dog and its handler have learnt to trust each other, they can get down to the progressively more intensive training. For guard dogs, destined for life with the MoD Police, this means being taught to attack and grip a suspect's arm. This controlled aggression is vital and comes only after hours and repetition on the training field.

Dogs have given vital service in most battlefields. They were messengers in the trenches of the First World War, used to quell rioters in the Malaya emergency after the Second World War, and to search for mines in the Falklands.

They have to be ready for anything, so part of the training is devoted to acclimatising them to the unexpected — from a gun going off to jumping on board helicopters.

They are not pets, insists Major Les Kelly, who is in charge of the canine division. They are being trained for work in dangerous situations. However, he says: "The dog must enjoy what he is doing, otherwise he simply will not do it."

Private Harland has, like each of the 180 military and civilian staff, volunteered for duty at the centre, because he "wanted something with job satisfaction. You strike up a close personal working relationship with the dog," he says, "which makes it very rewarding."

The rewards for the animal are plentiful, too — eight or nine years of enjoyable and highly active life in which they are well-treated, loved and highly stimulated.

And at the end of their service? About 95 per cent of dogs are found retirement homes. And it is then that they can go back to where they started from: sitting by the fire, wagging their tails and looking longingly at the lead for their evening walk.

● An Unlikely Hero, *starring Milo, is on BBC1 on Thursday at 8pm.*

CHARLOTTE WINN

Service dog Robbo and a retrieved gun, with Private Law Griffiths

A VET WRITES

Q Why do dogs have dewclaws, and should they be removed?

A Many million years ago, when the first animals developed legs, the basic design of the foot was five toes — the "pentadactyl limb". Some animals have discarded one or more toes during the course of their evolution. Horses have lost four; their hoof is a single toe. Cows and sheep have two, as do pigs, which also have a couple of little ones at the back of the leg. Elephants have kept all five on their front feet. Dogs and cats have four "working" toes and the dewclaw part way up the leg. Humans have four fingers and a thumb developed from the same evolutionary precursor as the dog's dewclaw.

Hind-leg dewclaws are on the way out. Most dogs don't have them and, when they are present, there is often no bony attachment to the rest of the leg. Dogs use their front dewclaws when they are cornering at speed or climbing up a bank.

There is no good reason for removing front dewclaws, although those on the hind leg can cause trouble, either because the nail overgrows or because a loosely attached dewclaw is torn. It makes sense to remove these when a pup is three or four days old. Otherwise leave dewclaws (and tails) as nature intended.

Q Spring is on its way and before long my cat, Attila, will be leaving "tributes" on the doorstep. Last year, he brought me baby mice as well as frogs, featherless baby birds and one of the neighbour's goldfish. I know he's showing his affection for me but how can I discourage these unwanted gifts?

A Showing complete lack of interest in Attila's hunting trophies might help. He'll still catch and kill but he is less likely to bring his victims home. Wait until Attila's out of sight before removing the corpses and don't tell him off or punish him. If you react in any way, he has achieved his object. You've taken notice.

It would be politically correct to suggest fitting Attila with a bell on his collar to warn his victims, but I don't believe it would help. Fish, frogs and birds don't use sound as their early warning system.

Q Are seahorses difficult to keep? I have kept tropical fish and have a glass aquarium, 3ft long, with a heater. What else will I need and what do they eat?

A Seahorses are more demanding than the usual fresh water tropicals. They live in salt water. A good aquarium shop will supply the salts needed to turn ordinary tap water into satisfactory sea water. However, because the tank water evaporates — and salt doesn't — care must be taken to measure the salinity and adjust it when necessary. So you need a hygrometer.

The preferred water temperature is 72F-80F. Seahorses also like well-aerated water, so you will need an aerator pump to keep the water moving.

Seahorses spend most of their life hanging, by their tail, on to twigs and stems in the water. Fit the aquarium with suitable "hitching posts". Dwarf seahorses live on baby shrimps — alive or frozen — from specialist suppliers.

The half-dozen successful seahorse-keepers I have known have all had a single-minded enthusiasm for their hobby and paid attention to every detail.

JAMES ALLCOCK

● *Write to The Times Vet, Weekend,* The Times, *1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. Advice is offered without legal responsibility.*

READERS' PET TALES

RICHARD SAUNDERS

Patch, Sam and Polly compete for the best TV view

UNLIKE Mishkin, the cat who was uninterested in the video *Cool for Cats* (Weekend, January 10), three of our six felines find it fascinating. When the video is put on, Patch, Sam and Polly compete for the best viewing position. Their favourite bits are the blue tits on peanuts, canaries, white mice, and the foraging blackbird, on whose appearance Polly has been known to throw herself at the television set in her attempts to catch the bird. Patch looks for the bird behind the set. They seem happy to watch repeats. — Stella Saunders, Winchester, Hampshire.

● *Send your story to: Readers' Pet Tales, Weekend,* The Times, *1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. We regret that photographs cannot be returned.*

It started with an ode to a departed cat. Now **Francis Gilbert** explains his role as the family poet

Farewell then, old friend

I will never forget the howls of pain that filled my grandmother's kitchen that night. Timmy, her tabby cat, was lying in his basket, his frame wasted, a cancerous lump protruding from his ribcage, and his mouth emitting piercing wails as Granny tried to feed him teaspoons of milk laced with painkiller.

"I can't bear the thought of him leaving me," she sighed. "He's been so good to me. Do you know he used to bring me presents of dead mice in the morning and lay them at the bottom of my bed?"

I shuddered at the memory of all the dead animals that Timmy had dragged through my grandparent's draughty old farmhouse at Christon Bank, near Alnwick, Northumberland.

Next morning, my grandfather drove us in their dog and cat-hair-encrusted Citroën 2CV to the vet, where Timmy was put to sleep.

On the way back, Granny asked whether I would write a poem about Timmy which would immortalise him. I was 14 and writing lyrics which were largely influenced by rock bands: The Jam, The Clash and the Sex Pistols. Granny had come across some of my social protest jottings, professed a liking for them and proclaimed me a "poet". The rest of the family groaned.

This was my first commission, and I was determined to do my best, even though I never had much affection for Timmy. I spent hours thinking of suitable images and writing a poem that both scanned and rhymed. Granny read it to Grandpa a number of times and they agreed it was a fine poem. She framed it with a photograph of Timmy and put it on the mantelpiece.

Over the years the mantelpiece became so crowded with my elegies to her dead pets that she had to shift them all to a larger shelf.

In time, my dislike of domestic animals, exacerbated by an allergy to animal hair, has grown, but I am still expected to write the poems.

My grandparents treat their pets with more respect than humans. Serving the animals' dinner is much more important than feeding their family. The cats have the run of the house: you will find them licking the spilt sauce on the stove and scrabbling around for bones in the pantry.

Like Timmy, the cats leave numerous "presents" of dead rats, moles, mice and birds — in beds, on the kitchen table and in the scullery.

Whereas my grandmother is a cat-lover, my grandfather's passion has always been dogs. One day, my brother fell off his bike and lost some teeth. My grandfather drove him to the dentist but didn't seem very concerned. But when his pet mongrel, Bat, was accidently hit in the mouth by my brother's cricket bat, Grandpa was in an awful state. He rushed to the wimpering animal saying: "He's very delicate. You shouldn't be playing rough games with him."

My grandparents are the only people I know who have asked for a postmortem examination of a pet. When Sindy, a labrador, collapsed and died after scoffing a mountainous meal, it was obvious to everyone else that she had conked out from a heart attack. The dog was monstrously fat. But my grandparents refused to believe that their dinners had caused her death. The postmortem proved them wrong.

The most successful elegy I wrote was also, I am convinced, one of my worst. When Goldie, another pet dog, died I knew that I had to compose an epic work, because she was the longest lived of all their dogs. But at 12 years old her incontinence and arthritis ahd become tiresome — not least to her. My grandparents kept her alive for six more years.

I was studying English literature at university when Goldie died. As an earnest student, I decided to write about Death on his pale horse pursuing the dog across the years. With the benefit of hindsight, I can see that it was a particularly dreadful, pompous poem. But Granny wept when she read it. Since then I have attempted to make my poems more light-hearted.

The poem I like best is the one that Granny likes the least. It was about a cat, Gemma, who developed an ear infection when she was a kitten and, as a result, became partially deaf and always walked with her head cocked to one side. Even Granny would get irritable with her: "She's my little mental patient. But it's not her fault. She was so ill when she was little. It's lucky she's alive."

Not lucky for me. I was always being bitten and scratched by Gemma. The poem I wrote told the truth about her and had the refrain, "mad, bad and dangerous to know".

Granny so disliked the poem that she asked me to rewrite it so that she would have "more pleasant memories of Gemma".

The last poem I wrote, for Bat, proclaimed him my favourite. I loved Bat with his foxy tail and his good manners — a rarity among my grandparents' pets, who are generally very spoilt.

I often wander down to his seashell grave in the garden and think of him scampering down to Embleton Sands.

NORTH NEWS AND PICTURES

Francis Gilbert, with his grandmother, whose pets he immortalised in poetry

GEMMA

by Francis Gilbert, March 5, 1995

Mad, bad and dangerous to know
Dancing in the sun, leaping in the snow,
Lazing by the old stove, crouching
at my feet,
Lying on my lap and scratching at the seat.

Prowling under the lion-pawed table,
Hunting under the ruined barn's gable,
Running towards Christon Bank's glow,
You were mad, bad and dangerous to know.

No one could forget your swiping claws,
Your vicious bite. You had survived
the wars
Of disease and destitution.
You had discovered that the solution

To the hapless human's lack of attention
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Impossible to forget but no one's beau
You were mad, bad and dangerous to know.

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Bridge for improvers; Woodcarving; Recorded music, from cylinders to CDs. At Knuston Hall Residential College, Irchester, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire (01933 312104). Price £89 per course, inclusive.

Treasures in the attic; Exploring mixed media and pastels; Chinese brush painting. All this weekend at the Old Rectory, Fittleworth, West Sussex (01798 865306). From £114 residential, £90 non-residential.

An introduction to Persian carpets; Renaissance music weekend; Painting miniatures and silhouettes; Glass engraving for beginners. At West Dean College, Chichester, West Sussex (01243 811301). Prices from £150 residential, £97 non-residential.

Get fit for skiing weekends: Improve your stamina, balance and mobility on a cycling break in the Cotswolds, plus exercises from a qualified instructor. With Compass Holidays (01242 250642). Prices from £117, or £89 with own bike.

Portrait drawing and painting; Introduction to canvas work; Atmospheric watercolours; French through literature, Marcel Proust; Still-life painting. At Missenden Abbey, Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire (01494 890295). Price £150 residential, £69.20 non-residential.

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FEBRUARY 13-15

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هكذا من الإصل

Martin Fletcher hears former President Jimmy Carter talk at a Baptist church in Plains, Georgia

From President to preacher

Driving westwards, I meandered for about 200 miles through the heart of rural Georgia along country roads that were so straight and flat and empty that I could balance my coffee cup on the dashboard without fear of spillage.

The further I went the more agricultural the land became. At about 3.30pm I finally arrived in Plains, home of Jimmy Carter, the former President.

Back in 1977, during Mr Carter's first year in the White House, as many as 15,000 tourists a day would flock to this town of just 700 people. Such crowds are now long gone, however, and I had the place almost to myself.

The town is all of about eight blocks long, stretched out on either side of the main road and a railway line. At one end is Mr Carter's old peanut warehouse. And another block along is the little white weatherboard railway station from which the "Peanut Express" left for the inauguration with almost the entire town on board.

The Carters still live at the far end of the main road. It is a long, low house set well back from the road and surrounded by trees and a high iron fence. A Stars and Stripes hung limply from a single flagpole.

I began to marvel that a man from such a tiny place could reach the White House, but then I stopped and remembered. There had been Bill Clinton from Hope, Arkansas; Ronald Reagan from Tampico, Illinois; Richard Nixon from Yorba Linda, California; Harry Truman from Independence, Missouri; Dwight Eisenhower from Abilene, Kansas. Lincoln, of course, was raised in his legendary log cabin.

What made Mr Carter exceptional among other presidents was that he returned to his small town after his political career was over. When not circling the globe resolving conflicts, monitoring elections in banana republics or building low-cost housing for Atlanta's poor, he is often seen jogging through Plains. He mows the grass at his church. He also teaches an adult Sunday school class there, and that was what I had really come to witness.

The Maranatha Baptist Church is a newish, low brick building surrounded by fields. I arrive there at 9.45 the next morning to find the pastor, Dan Ariail, briefing a congregation swollen by perhaps 50 other visitors like myself. Someone asks what it is like to be pastor of a President's church. A great opportunity, Mr Ariail replies cheerily, and adds that every Sunday, after Mr Carter has done his bit, he himself gets to preach to dozens of people who would not normally go near a church. A few of us wriggle uncomfortably in our seats.

As Mr Ariail finishes his introduction, the 39th President of the United States appears unannounced. Rosalynn, his wife, and one of their grandsons take their places in the front row. There are audible whispers and giggles from the pews. Mr Carter is dressed in an open shirt, dark checked jacket and grey trousers. He is 72 and silver-haired but tall, unbowed and obviously fit.

"Are there any visitors here today?" he asks disingenuously. A few dozen hands shoot up.

"Where y'all from?" he asks. People shout out umpteen different states. There are people from Britain, Australia, Brazil and India. One man says he is from the Dominican Republic.

"You have a new president there," Mr Carter says. "D'you like him all right? We helped conduct the election there the 30th of June. I think he's doing a fine job."

Once the long preamble is over, Mr Carter switches on a video of Jay Leno, a late-night television comic, interviewing people on the streets of New York about the Bible. "How many animals in Noah's Ark?" Leno asks one woman.

"Five?" comes the uncertain reply.

"Name the four gospels," he asks another.

She cannot.

"OK, name the four Beatles."

"John, Paul, George and Ringo," the woman replies.

Leno challenges a man to cite one of the Ten Commandments.

"Freedom of speech," he replies after a long pause.

The congregation is roaring with laughter. Mr Carter has made his point. He takes a verse from Timothy as his text: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and righteousness."

For the next 40 minutes he paces from side to side, explaining how we should read the Bible to learn how to live just as we use a manual to learn how to use a computer or a new motorbike. Life should be about much more than becoming rich or important, he says. We should strive to "stretch our hearts". We should aim for "transcendence". By reading the Bible we could learn how to follow the examples of Jesus, particularly his love for his enemies.

It is a persuasive discourse, perfectly pitched for the irreligious in the congregation, but then you do not become President of the United States unless you can communicate. Nor, for that matter, can you become President of this God-fearing country without at least professing to be an active Christian, though in Mr Carter's case his faith is unquestionably sincere.

There is a brief break before the service proper begins. Mr Carter joins Rosalynn and his grandson in the congregation. A few of the visitors slip away but there is still a sizeable congregation, including several secret service agents who stand out a mile because they neither sing nor pray.

An hour later we all pour out into the sunshine where the Carters happily pose for photographs with anyone who wants to. They are in no hurry. It is all amazingly informal. You almost expect to be invited home for Sunday lunch.

That does not happen, alas, and after 20 minutes the man often described as "the best former President America has ever had" climbs into a grey Chrysler saloon with his wife, and a secret service agent drives them home.

Carter's discourse is perfectly pitched for the irreligious

Time for a sermon: Jimmy Carter, left, with his wife, Rosalynn, and Martin Fletcher

A welcome to the Sabbath

Ruth Gledhill joins the congregation of a Reform synagogue

After a warm welcome from senior warden Derek Gerver and warden Coral Montefiore, a drugs and bereavement counsellor, I sat facing the Ark, in which were housed the scrolls of the Torah, the first five books of the Bible, and on which was written: "Serve the Lord with gladness." The North Western Reform Synagogue is part of the Progressive movement in Anglo-Jewry, which advocates the harmonisation of Judaic tradition with modernity. Unlike in an Orthodox synagogue, the men and women sat together. The atmosphere was relaxed, friendly and informal as we joined in worship to "receive the Sabbath with song and prayer".

The congregation sang in Hebrew the Sabbath greeting: "Come, my friend, to greet the bride, to welcome in the Sabbath eve." In a symbolic gesture, the back doors of the synagogue were opened and a gust of fresh air rushed in. "To greet the Sabbath let us join, for from her endless blessings pour," we sang. In the Jewish community the Sabbath begins at sunset on Friday.

Rabbi Charles Emanuel talked of the time when the Israelites were held captive in Egypt. He spoke of the midwives referred to in Exodus who resisted Pharaoh's instructions to kill any boy babies they helped to deliver. "They realised they had to decide what was the right thing to do," the rabbi said. "Most of us will never be great names in the world. We may not be like Moses. But hopefully we will have the courage of our convictions to do what is right."

The synagogue was founded more than 60 years ago. It was the second Reform synagogue to be built in London with members of the community wanting to strengthen their religious observance as the horrors of Nazism became apparent and a stream of refugees escaped to Britain. The synagogue is famed for its art. Its foundation stone was carved by the late Benno Elkan, the sculptor who fled Frankfurt in 1933 and whose masterpiece, the *Menorah*, stands outside the Israeli Knesset.

Today it has more than 2,000 members. It is active in child and adult education, as well as music and the arts and social events, and has led the field in permitting the participation of women. It elected a female chairman, Joyce Rose, in 1978 and now has another woman, Lee Wax, as its associate rabbi. She led most of our service.

Prominent among those who worship there is Sir Sigmund Sternberg, of the International Council of Christians and Jews, and founder of the Three Faiths Forum. It offers lectures on subjects such as "The Jewishness of Sigmund Freud" and "Spirituality".

● *North Western Reform Synagogue, Alyth Gardens, Finchley Road, London NW11 7EN (0181-455 6063).*

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Rabbi Charles Emanuel and Associate Rabbi Lee Wax

Tampering with destiny is a dangerous path to tread

Credo

JONATHAN SACKS

In 1978, the American science writer David Rorvik published a book entitled *In His Image*. It told the story of an American millionaire who wished to have a child exactly like himself, and to do so he was willing to finance a laboratory to apply cloning techniques to human reproduction. The experiment was successful. For the first time, a child was born not as the result of the combination of the genes of two parents, but as the replica of a single existing individual. It had become possible to clone a human being.

The book raised a storm of controversy before it was discovered to be a hoax. Twenty-two years on, however, the scenario has become a real possibility with the announcement by Chicago scientist Dr Richard Seed that he intends to proceed with research on human embryos following the successful cloning of Dolly the sheep.

Rightly, scientists in America and Europe have called for a ban on such research in view of the formidable risks of abortions, abnormalities and infant deaths. But there is a deeper issue at stake. Dr Seed raised it himself by claiming to find a biblical mandate for his proposal to the idea that humanity was created in the image of God. "God intended," he is reported as saying, "for man to become one with God. We are going to have almost as much knowledge and power as God."

Ironically, it was this very phrase — "the image of God" — that led the rabbis of the 3rd century to formulate one of the strongest caveats *against* cloning. The Mishnah (the first post-biblical court of law) in its reflection on the sanctity of life, drew this contrast: "When a human being strikes many coins from the same mould, they are all alike. The Holy One, blessed be He, creates human beings, each in His image, yet every one is different."

We are "in the image of God" not because we are like one another but because we are unlike one another. God is to be found not in identity, but diversity. It is the fact that each of us is unique, and hence irreplaceable, that leads to the conclusion, drawn in the same Mishnah teaching, that "whoever saves a single life is as if he had saved an entire world, and whoever destroys a single life is as if he had destroyed an entire world".

Many of our most profound emotions flow from this fact. Love is the attachment to one who is like no other. Grief is the sense of loss of one who was and will not be again. Our very sense of identity flows from the thought that each of us is a person whose attributes are not shared by anyone else.

What would happen to these concepts if it transpired that we were no more than types, reproducible at will, if unique genetic configurations could be replicated much as compact discs and computer memories can be? The philosopher Bernard Williams argued that "much of what we call loving a person would crack" under the strain — and much else besides.

This is not a conclusive argument against cloning. Identical twins already exist as replicas of one another. Cloning techniques may allow treatment of infertility in ways not presently available. But extraordinary care will have to be taken before we go down a path that may call into question the uniqueness of a human life. Humility is the first requirement in the use of godlike power.

● *Jonathan Sacks is the chief rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations*

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BELFAST CATHEDRAL: 10 M; 11 S Euch, Missa Sancti Joannis de Deo (Haydn); 3.30 Leprosy Mission Service.

BIRMINGHAM CATHEDRAL: 9 MP; 9.15 HC; 11 Ch Euch, 4 Ch E and Carols.

BRECON CATHEDRAL: 8, 11 Euch; 3.30 E, Stanford in B flat.

BRISTOL CATHEDRAL: 7.40 M; 8 HC; 10 Ch Euch, Jackson in G; 3.30 Ch E.

CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.30 M; 11 S Euch, Poulenc in G; 3.15 E; 6.30 Special service for Christian unity.

CARLISLE CATHEDRAL: 10.30 S Euch, Fantasia in A (Byrd); 3 E, Wood in D.

CHELMSFORD CATHEDRAL: 7.30 MP; 8 HC; 9.30 Euch; 11.15 S Euch, Missa Brevis (Gabrieli); 6 Ch E.

CHICHESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 M, Harwood in A flat; 11 S Euch; 3.30 E.

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, Dublin: 11 S Euch; 3.30 Ch E, Chichester Service (Walton).

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, Oxford: 8 HC; 10 M; 11.15 S Euch, Canon Webster; 6 E, Purcell in B flat.

COVENTRY CATHEDRAL: 7.40 MP; 8 C; 10.30 Euch; 3 German & Polish Lutheran's Services; 5 Ch E, Wood in F.

DERBY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10.45 S Euch, Leighton in D; 6 Ch E.

DURHAM CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 M, Stanford in C, Canon M Perry; 11.15 HC,3.30 E, Fifth Service (Tomkins).

ELY CATHEDRAL: 8.15 HC; 10.30 S Euch, Missa O quam gloriosum (Victoria), Canon D Green; 3.45 E.

EXETER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.45 S Euch, Leighton in D; 11.15 M; 3 E; 6.30 ES.

GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10.15 Euch, Messe Solennelle (Langlais), Canon C Morgan; 12.15 HC; 3 E.

GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.45 S Euch, Missa Brevis (Walton); 11.30 Gordon's School Service; 6.30 E.

HEREFORD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 Euch, Schubert in G; 11.30 M; 3.30 E, Jackson in G, Canon B Chave.

LEICESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 M; 10.30 Euch, Schubert in G, Canon A Thiselton; 4 Ch E, Murrill in E.

LINCOLN CATHEDRAL: 7.45 L; 8 HC; 9.30 S Euch, Schubert in G; 11.15 M; 12.30 HC; 3.45 E, Watson in E, Canon P Dadd.

LIVERPOOL CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10.30 Euch, Dean of Liverpool; 3 Ch E; 4 HC.

LLANDAFF CATHEDRAL: 7.30 M & L; 8, 9 Euch; 11 S Euch, Darke in E; 12.15 Euch; 3.30 Ch E; 6.30 E.

MANCHESTER CATHEDRAL: 8.45 M; 9 Euch; 10.30 S Euch, Darke in F; 6.30 EP.

NEWCASTLE CATHEDRAL: 7.30 M; 8 HC; 9.30 S Euch, Mozart in E flat, Archdeacon of Northumberland; 6 Ch E.

NEWPORT CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10.30 M; 6.30 E, Mass for Four Voices (Byrd).

NORWICH CATHEDRAL: 7.30 MP; 8 HC; 10.30 S Euch, Missa Euge Bone (Tye); 3.30 Festal E; 6.30 Night Prayer.

PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL: 9.30 M; 10.30 Euch, Westminster Service (Kelly); 3.30 E, Wood in E flat.

PORTSMOUTH CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.30 Euch, Mass of St Thomas (Thorne); 11 S Euch, Canon J Hedges; 6 E.

ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.45 M; 10.30 S Euch, Darke in F; 3.15 E.

SALISBURY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 Euch, Canon J Davies; 11.30 M; 3 E, Chichester Service (Walton).

SHEFFIELD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 MP; 10.30 S Euch, Jackson in G; 6.30 E.

SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL: 9 Euch; 11 Ch Euch, Five Part Mass (Byrd); 3 Ch E.

SOUTHWELL MINSTER: 7.30 M & L; 8 HC; 9.30 C; 11 S Euch, Missa Sancti Joannis de Deo (Haydn); 3.15 E.

TRURO CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9 M; 10 Sol S Euch; 3 Christingle 250th Anniversary Service; 6 Sol E, Dyson in D.

WAKEFIELD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.15 C; 11 Sol Euch; 4 Sol E, Dyson in D.

WELLS CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.45 S Euch, Mass for five voices (Byrd); 11.30 M, Stanford in C; 3 E, Archdeacon of Wells.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY: 8 HC; 10 M; 11.15 Euch, Missa Brevis (Leighton); 3 E; 5.45 Organ Recital; Ron Davis; 6.30 ES.

WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL: 7, 8, 9 Mass; 10.30 Sol Mass, Missa Brevis in C (Mozart); 12 Mass; 2.45 Organ Recital; John Browne; 3.30 Sol V & B; 5.30, 7 Mass.

WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL: 10 M; 11.15 S Euch; 3.30 E, Stanford in B flat.

YORK MINSTER: 8, 8.45 HC; 10 S Euch, Stanford in C; 11.30 M; 4 E.

ST ALBAN'S CATHEDRAL, Hertfordshire: 8 HC; 9.30 Euch; 11 M; 12.15 HC; 6.30 E, Wood in E flat, Canon A Esdaile.

ST ANDREW'S CATHEDRAL, Aberdeen: 8 HC; 10.15 S Euch, Schubert in G, Rev G McLean; 6.30 Ch E, Dyson in F.

ST ASAPH CATHEDRAL, Denbighshire: 8 HC; 11 Ch M; 3.30 EP.

ST DAVIDS CATHEDRAL, Pembs: 7.30 MP; 8 HC; 9.30 Cymun Bendigaid; 11.15 Ch Euch, Sumsion in F; 6 Ch E, Brewer in D.

ST EDMUNDSBURY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 S Euch; Caldara in G (How); 11.30 Ch C; 3.30 Ch E, Murrill in E.

ST FIN BARRE'S CATHEDRAL, Cork: 8 Euch; 11.15 Ch Euch, Sumsion in F, Rev M Graham; 7 Sung Compline.

ST GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL, Southwark: 8, 10 LM; 11.30 Sol Mass, Mass for Four Voices (Byrd); 6 LM.

ST GILES' CATHEDRAL, Edinburgh: 8, 10 HC; Missa Brevis (Berkeley); 11.30 MS; 6 University Renaissance Singers; 8 ES.

ST MACHAR'S CATHEDRAL, Old Aberdeen: 11 MS, Rev R Frazer; 6 ES.

ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL, Edinburgh: 8 Euch; 10.30 S Euch, Rev J Conway; 3.30 Ch E, Collegium Regale (Howells).

ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL, Dublin: 8.30 Euch; 11.15 M; 3.15 Ch E in Thanksgiving for the life of Daphne Griffin.

ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 8.45 M; 11 S Euch, Missa Sancti Pauli (Carter); 3.15 E, St Paul's Service (Howells).

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL, SW7: 10.30 Divine Liturgy, Kievan and traditional polyphony, Met Anthony.

ALL SAINTS, W1: 8 LM; 10.20 MP; 11 HM, Missa Brevis (Kodaly); 5.15 LM; 6 E & B, Wise in F.

ALL SOULS, W1: 8 C; 9.30, 11.30 MP, Rev P Blackham; 6.30 EP.

CHELSEA OLD CHURCH, SW3: 8 HC; 10 Children's Service; 11 M; 12.15 HC; 6 E.

CROWN COURT CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, WC2: 11.15 MS; 6.30 ES.

FARM STREET, W1: 8, 9.30 LM; 11 HM; 12.30 LM; 4.15 Mass; 6.15 LM.

HOLY TRINITY BROMPTON, SW7: 9 HC; 11 MS; 5, 7.30 Informal Service.

HOLY TRINITY, SW1: 8.45 Euch; 11 S Euch, Rev R Ballard.

THE ORATORY, SW7: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 Mass, Laudate Pueri (Lassus); 12.30 Mass; 3.30 V & B, Rorate Caeli (Guerrero); 4.30, 7 Mass.

ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH W8: 11 Holy Mass, Archbishop Y Gizirian.

WESLEY'S CHAPEL, EC2: 9.45 HC, Rev G Squire; 11 MS, Rev E Fletcher.

WESTMINSTER CENTRAL HALL (Methodist): 11 MP; 6.30 ES, Rev B Lucas.

ST ANNE AND ST AGNES (Lutheran), Gresham St, EC2: 11 Ch Euch; 7 Jazz Vespers, St Anne's Jazz Choir.

ST BARTHOLOMEW THE GREAT, EC1: 9 HC; 11 Ch Euch, Missa Festva (Peeters); 6.30 E, Wesley in E.

ST BRIDE'S, EC4: 11 Ch M, Jackson in G, Canon J Oates; 6.30 Ch E, Dyson in D.

ST CLEMENT DANES, WC2: 11 Ch Euch, Missa O quam gloriosum (Victoria), Rev A Brown.

ST COLUMBA'S CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, SW1: 11 HC; 3 HC; 6.30.

ST ETHELDREDA'S, EC1: 11 S Mass, Mass of St Brigid (Seymour).

ST GEORGE'S, W1: 8.30 HC; 11 S Euch, Mass for Four Voices (Byrd), The Rector.

ST JAMES'S, W1: 9.15 HC; 11 S Euch, Rev M Robins; 5.45 EP.

ST JOHN'S, E15: 11 Family Service, Carillon de Westminster (Vierne), Rev D Richards; 6.30 HC.

ST LUKE'S, SW3: 8 HC; 10.30 S Euch; 6.30 E, Rev C Kevill-Davies.

ST MARK'S, NW1: 8 HC; 9.45 Family C; 11 S Euch, St Nicholas Mass (Haydn), Rev R McLaren.

ST MARGARET'S, SW1: 11 S Euch, Messe Solennelle (Langlais).

ST MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS, WC2: 8 HC; 9.45 Euch, Rev C Herbert; 11.30 Visitors Service; 2.45 Chinese Service, Rev G Lee; 5 Ch E; 6.30 ES.

ST MARY ABBOTS CHURCH, W8: 8 HC; 9.30 Euch; 11.15 Ch M, Rev E Shegog; 12.30 HC; 6.30 E, Ms L Buxton.

ST MARY'S, SW1: 9, 10 LM; 11 HM, Fr B Scott; 6 Sol E & B; 7 LM.

ST MARY-THE-VIRGIN, NW3: 8 HC; 10.30 Euch, O quam gloriosum (Byrd), Rev S Chrystal; 6 Living with faith.

ST MARYLEBONE, NW1: 8 HC; 11 Ch Euch, Missa Sancti Nicolai (Haydn).

ST PAUL'S, SW1: 8, 9 HC; 11 Sol Euch, Little Organ Mass (Haydn).

ST PETER'S, SW1: 8.15 HC; 10 Family Euch; 11 S Euch, Missa Brevis (Palestrina).

CHAPEL ROYAL OF ST PETER AD VINCULA, HM Tower of London: 9.15 HC; 11 M, Responses: Ebdon; Canon K Peters.

CHAPEL ROYAL, St James's Palace: 8.30 HC; 11.15 MP, Canon M A Moxon.

CHAPEL ROYAL, Hampton Court Palace: 8.30 HC; 11 M, Stanford in B flat; 3.30 E, Gloucester Service (Howells).

GROSVENOR CHAPEL, South Audley St, W1: 11 S Euch, Spätzenmesse (Mozart).

QUEEN'S CHAPEL OF THE SAVOY, WC2: 11 M, Stanford in C; 12.30 HC.

GRAY'S INN CHAPEL, WC1: 11.15 M, Sumsion in G.

THE TEMPLE CHURCH, EC4: 8.30, 11.15 HC, Missa Brevis (Walton), Ven K Gibbons.

GUARDS CHAPEL, Wellington Barracks, SW1: 11 M, Rev L H Bryan, Band of the Blues and Royals; 12 HC.

ROYAL NAVAL COLLEGE CHAPEL, SE10: 11 S Euch, Anglican Folk Mass, Rev R Nurton.

● *Compiled by Deborah King*

Protection for returning tourists

Egypt · 25

THE TIMES
TRAVEL

Don't let this woman fly your plane

Flight simulator · 28

But now it is hip to be square

The current guide (top) might have 1,000 pages but it has lost the swim shorts of the original (above)

A fresh-faced Andrew Eames on the Asian trail for the first time (left), and his passport (right)

GRAPHIC: PAUL BRYANT

Mr Ken, on the Khao San Road in Bangkok, repairs his Shoestring guide with glue and bulldog clips

Wat Indrawihan, Bangkok: the city has become the backpacking hub of southeast Asia

How it all began: Maureen Wheeler in a Singapore hotel room 25 years ago

FACT FILE

■ Getting there: Trailfinders (0171-937 5400) is offering return flights from Heathrow to Singapore from £379, to Bangkok from £405 and to Kuala Lumpur from £379. All fares include tax and are valid until June 15 1998.

■ Red Tape: All passports must be valid for at least six months from date of entry. Singapore: no visa is needed for British passport holders staying up to 30 days. Singapore High Commission: 0171-201 1804. For stays of longer than 30 days, contact the immigration office at 10 Kallang Road, Singapore 208718 (00 65 391 6100).

■ Malaysia: no visa needed by British passport holders. Those arriving by air are generally allowed a 60-day stay, *and a further 30-day stay can* be arranged when you are there. Malaysian High Commission: 0171-235 8033.

■ Thailand: no visa requirements for British passport holders if you have a confirmed ticket for onward travel and will leave within 30 days. To obtain a visa for a longer stay, send an SAE to The Consular, Royal Thai Embassy, 29 Queensgate, London SW7 5JB. Visa information: 0891 600150 (premium rates).

■ Health — consider protection against polio, tetanus, *diptheria, typhoid, malaria.* For an extended stay in rural areas, consider hepatitis A and B, rabies, tuberculosis, Japanese B Encephalitis, and meningococcal meningitis. Useful guides include *Staying Healthy in Asia, Africa and Latin America* (Moon Publications, £7.95); *Travellers' Health* by Dr Richard Dawood (Oxford University Press, £8.99); *The Travellers' Healthbook* (Wexas, £9.99). For specific advice contact your GP.

■ Guidebook choice: *South-East Asia on a Shoestring* (Lonely Planet, £13.99). The Lonely Planet website is *http://www.lonelyplanet.com*.

■ Tony Wheeler, who founded Lonely Planet, will be speaking about Antarctica at Ottakar's Bookshop, Bromley (0181-460 6037) on Thursday, January 29, at 7pm.

Andrew Eames retraces the hippy trail in southeast Asia with the original *Lonely Planet* guidebook

Many moons ago, a fresh-faced 21-year-old bearing my name set off to travel the exotic East equipped with a loo roll and a new guidebook nicknamed the *Yellow Bible* by someone called Tony Wheeler. The *Yellow Bible* was the first edition of *Southeast Asia on a Shoestring* in 1973. With its publisher, Lonely Planet, turning a mature 25 this year, it seemed an appropriate moment to retrace some of those first faltering steps on the hippy trail, to catch up with the who, what and where of hanging out in the Orient.

Singapore: Wheeler records that the *Yellow Bible* was entirely put together "in room two of the Palace Hotel in Singapore. Any mistakes I blame on the noise from the motorcycle repair shop downstairs". A seminal place, obviously. Yet travellers have never liked Singapore: too modern, too western.

In those days, besides cheap typesetting, it was good for Teaching English as a Foreign Language, which is what interrupted my travels. I shared the floor of a furniture-less flat above a travel agency with four other travellers: the two blokes were working intermittently offshore, and the women were "hostessing", accompanying visiting businessmen out to dinner ... and, well, hopefully their mothers never found out.

Back then, those suspected of seditious hippy tendencies had to have a haircut before they were allowed to cross the causeway from Malaysia, and it used to be a great achievement to get that "Suspected Hippy in Transit" (SHIT) stamp in your passport.

The budget accommodation is still where it ever was: on the upper floors of 46-52 Bencoolen Street. The notices are yellowed with age and the proprietors remain distinctly underwhelmed by the arrival of new customers. In the Botanic Gardens I meet a shaven-headed woman from Frankfurt with her possessions in a polythene bag. Singapore is so expensive, she explains, that she has been sleeping in parks for two weeks.

On Wheeler's original list of attractions is Bugis Street, where "Singapore's amazing transvestites frolic nightly". Bugis Street has long since been bulldozed away, but I spend the evening in the Boom Boom Room — a transvestite cabaret — and conclude that risqué jokes about toothpicks and anacondas are, along with Europeans sleeping rough, a sign that Singapore is maturing rapidly.

Kuala Lumpur: the announcement over the airline PA runs: "Welcome to Malaysia ... drug dealers will be put to death." Hippies beware.

I get my bearings over a breakfast of scrambled eggs on toast in the dog-eared Coliseum Hotel. Languid ceiling fans and languid Indian waiters in stained white tunics. The Coliseum is one of those rare venues that earns a mention in both the first and, 25 years on, the latest (ninth) edition of *the Shoestring*. Next door, the Rex and the Tivoli have also rumbled along unchanged from the first to the ninth: up seedy, sooty flights of stairs, bowed old Chinese gents are slopping out the lavatories.

Most of today's fresh-faced travellers are hanging out in new places in Chinatown. The chatty young proprietor of the Backpackers Travellers Lodge ("tonight's video *Terminator Two*") appreciates the need for good marketing. His Lonely Planet recommendation is very important, he says.

On the wall are postcards that typically begin "Hi everyone, I made it back to LA" and "How are you. Istanbul is very cold." I meet a disillusioned Austrian called Anya. She did not think much of south Thailand, she says, when I tell her where I am heading. "It's a bit like going to Spain."

It turns out she has been in KL for 20 whole days. Forty-eight hours in this sauna-with-traffic is more than enough for me. The bedroom walls are thin plywood and in the room next door two Polish women talk deep into the night.

Cameron Highlands: like an excited Egyptologist, I have stumbled on a couple of immortal sentences from the first edition still nestled among the copious text of the new book. I quote: "The only wildlife you are likely to see is the fantastic variety of butterflies. It was here that the American Thai silk entrepreneur, Jim Thompson, mysteriously disappeared in 1967 — he was never found." Masterful stuff.

> Suspected hippies in transit had to have a haircut

The Twin Pines Chalet in Tanah Rata comes highly recommended in the new guide. Anitha, articulate daughter of the owners, estimates that half their business is due to Lonely Planet, which is quoted extensively on the back of their leaflet.

The travellers' grapevine here comes in notebooks filled with comments. I learn where to get the best banana pancake in Lake Toba, and come across an example of introspection on the trail: above a long ramble about "*How I find it is always best to go local*", someone else has written: "Stop being an annoying stereotypical traveller."

Australian Zoë has also just arrived from KL, where she had been in a room next to some Malaysian men: "I heard every noise they made, and it wasn't very nice."

The Malaysian/Thai border: my route here has been via an obscure town in the middle of the peninsula, not mentioned in the book. As a result there were no other foreigners. The *vastly fatter Shoestring* — 1,000 pages instead of the original 150 — may have diluted the traveller's trail but Gua Musang is obviously a step too far.

Now I am back on the rails, at least as far as the book is concerned. As if to confirm it, I walk across the border with an English woman who is making her way home overland after working in Australia. In the railway station on the Thai side, she meets someone from a previous guest house and leaves me to compare and contrast my editions.

Hat Yai: Thailand is refreshingly, pleasantly exotic after Singapore and Malaysia. My co-travellers, too, have degenerated interestingly. Twenty years ago I met a Vietnam veteran living in a beach hut in Phuket (which earned a mere 70-word mention in the *Yellow Bible*, compared with five pages in the new edition), servicing his bodily needs with girls and fruit. Today the euphemistic rest and recreation of Hat Yai is being enjoyed to the full, but not by the travellers. A Thai "wife" said Lingam — a Malaysian Indian — cost him £20 for a day. But was he not already married? He shrugged. "Fish alone is not enough. You need meat and vegetables too," he said.

The manager of the Cathay Guest House, the *Shoestring*'s top spot in Hat Yai, is incensed because two Frenchmen have made off with their sheets and blankets. In this heat, it seems hard to believe.

In the airless coffee shop I fall into conversation with Richard from Coventry, who seems rather shocked by the hedonism of life on the road. In Chiang Mai he encountered a Swiss woman with a Thai motorcycle taxi driver in tow; *she was looking for an interpreter* to explain that she wanted to take him home to Switzerland and marry him.

She was breaking a cardinal rule of the open road: this sort of travel is all about dabbling in sex, drugs and exotic shopping — but the shopping is the only thing you take home.

The Cathay's noticeboard carries travellers' tips, including one that begins, "If you want to get away from everyone ..." Does anyone here really want to do that?

Bangkok: the *Yellow Bible* carried a paean of praise for the Malaysia Hotel, three times as long as the words it devoted to the whole of Phuket. *In those days*, the Malaysia looked a typical mid-range hotel, but the fittings were falling off the walls and there were cigarette burns on the sheets. So it was dead cheap and buzzing with odd-looking people. Rumours circulated about the latest raids, the lobby was plastered with handwritten notes, and you could buy any high you wanted in the car park.

A taxi driver drops me by the hotel. In silhouette it looks the same, but outside the entrance is a new mock-Greek portico with a waterfall and goldfish, all illuminated. I find a place to stay on Khao San Road, which has become the ultimate Lonely Planet community *in southeast Asia*, although I do not know whether the company would claim to have helped create it.

The series has a virtual monopoly in the many second-hand bookshops. Outside one,

Continued on page 24

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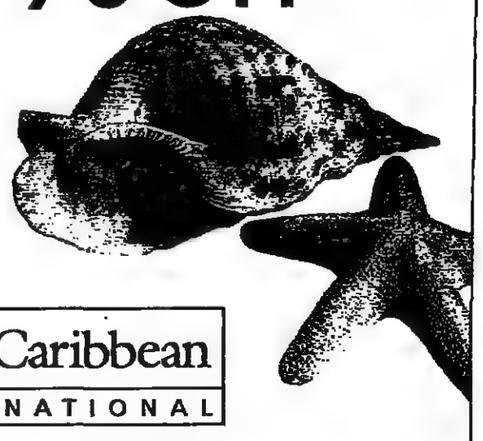

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هكذا من الإصل

THE HIPPY TRAIL

From page 23

Mr Ken is carefully restoring the eighth edition with glue and bulldog clips. "Too big," he says, shaking his head.

Travellers, too, come here in all states of repair. With hair newly beaded and discussing soap operas, they cruise the cafés in voluminous pantaloons. It feels comfortable, safe, like a club.

I have a suit made in 24 hours by K. Kenzo Collections for £40 including an extra pair of trousers. Do backpackers provide enough business? Absolutely, says Kenzo's Indian proprietor. And they usually pay with credit cards.

Back then, there were stories about the thieves who would gut your moneybelt while you were wedged into crowded buses, and the thin-armed children sent by their parents to raid the letterboxes in order to resell the stamps. Today, post is passé on Khao San Road. The Hello Internet Café says "Send your e-mails to Lonely Planet from here." I e-mail Australia, asking whether they get any messages from the Hello Internet Café. I do not get a reply.

Back in London, I contact LP again. We do get e-mails from the Hello, responds the Planet's PR machine. And to see what they say, I am directed to the Postcards section of the Web site. Searching for news from Bangkok, I read that "the useful 53 bus route from Hualamphong station to the Banglamphu area has been renumbered 25." Cool.

Tony Wheeler may have perfected the travellers' grapevine with his *Yellow Bible*, but the result is a certain demystification of the East.

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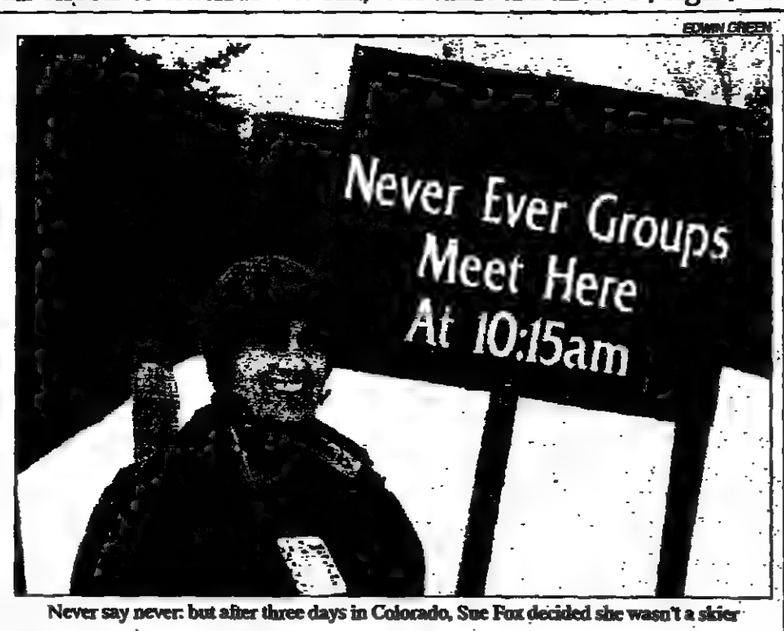
ANATOLIAN SKY HOLIDAYS

NORTH CYPRUS

Sue Fox resisted all efforts to teach her to ski; **Caroline Buchanan**, right, fared a little better, with the help of her 10-year-old daughter

EDWIN GREEN



Never say never: but after three days in Colorado, Sue Fox decided she wasn't a skier

Lesson one is learn to walk

As a writer who spends much of her life interviewing musicians, I have come to love the Aspen Summer Music Festival in Colorado. Aspen in July is beautiful, but I had never been there in winter. Dianne Milton from the Aspen Skiing Company had an idea. "Try our Three-Day First Time on Skis programme. We *guarantee* you'll learn to ski."

As soon as we arrived, we called Lorenzo Semple, who runs Suit Yourself, a ski clothes outfitting company, from the back of his van. He has an excellent selection of ski-gear, and hires out by the day or week.

We were booked into Buttermilk Mountain Ski School, on one of the two mountains used for beginners. Our three-day course was for first-timers, the Never Evers, and the instructors could not have been more patient.

"If you can learn to walk, you can learn to ski," promised George and Julia, our instructors. We were shown how to put on skis and how to walk in them. I couldn't even manage that.

Gamely, Julia said she'd take me on as a personal challenge. While everyone else learnt to side-step and make a snowplough with their skis, I was struggling. My boots felt like lead weights. What little balance I normally have seemed to have deserted me.

Everyone else went to the top of a mini-slope, from where they whooshed down, joyously screaming "I did it!". Paralysed with fear, I stayed at the bottom of the slope, handing out cups of iced water to my fellow Never Evers.

Nobody in our group had skied before. By lunchtime, Marcella, a South American mother of five grown-up children, was skiing down Panda Peak. Sharon, a New Zealand nanny, was also skiing at some speed, despite having crushed her legs in a car crash the previous year.

On day two, I started again with a new group and different instructors.

By day three, my husband, snowplougher *extraordinaire*, disappeared with George to the top of Buttermilk Mountain. After another morning stumbling about in my boots, I made a momentous decision. Obviously, learning to ski wasn't something I wanted badly enough.

A group of blind skiers and their guides, all wearing fluorescent signs saying Bold Skier and Bold Guide, whooshed past me as I hung up my skis.

I went to meet my husband for lunch. But where was he? By 2pm I was so anxious I reported him missing to the ski school office. An hour later, he limped into the restaurant clinging on to a tanned man who looked like someone out of a Mountain Rescue movie. "Meet Arnold — a St Bernard come to life," he laughed. Skiing down Buttermilk, his skis had failed to make a snowplough. Worse. They had turned out instead of in.

Fortunately, nothing was broken, but his leg hurt. We called Lisa Kane, who specialises in sports injury massage. Lisa's pummelling was so wonderful, my husband insisted on buying me a massage too.

Lisa asked about my fear of falling and lack of balance, suggesting I walk across the room. "Did you know your spine, your hips and your feet are completely out of kilter? Has no one ever suggested you learn how to walk properly? You need help."

It was a relief to know that my fear of skiing isn't entirely in my head, though I am not sure if I want to try it again.

Over the three-day programme, I was the only failure among the Never Evers. My husband wants to go back this winter. I have already booked my insulated suit from Lorenzo so that I can walk upright in the snow while everyone else takes to the mountains.

Intense experience, but success at last

My ten-year-old daughter, Francesca, was insistent. "Mum, you've got to learn to ski before it's too late. It's now-or-never time." As an old hand herself, having done just one week's skiing the previous year, she was willing to try insult, flattery, *anything* to get up into the mountains again.

How could I resist? A fortnight later, we were installed in the chalethotel La Christina in the jolly French resort of La Plagne, having signed up for Mark Warner's "Learn to Ski" week. Six days of intensive classes, with the promise of leisurely lunches in between.

Having begged and borrowed all the gear to keep things reasonably cheap, we set off for our first lesson. The only thing I had to buy was a jacket that would hide a multitude of sins. Skiwear is far from flattering unless you are a Kate Moss size six.

Mark Warner's head nanny, Mick, took the children off to their classes and I joined my group at the Oxygène ski school, just yards from the hotel. True to form, our instructor, Olivier, was devastatingly attractive, and the six women that made up our group were eager to please.

After several ungainly falls, most of us managed to master the snowplough stop and turns, but then came trouble. I couldn't handle the chairlifts — vertigo had set in. By the time we had sailed over a couple of precipices and reached the top, I was a nervous wreck. "It's time to pull the bar up now, ready to get off," Olivier ordered. I was so frozen with terror that he literally had to peel my white-knuckled fingers off the rail.

Tackling the slippery slope

Shattered at the end of the day, I looked forward to a steamy bath and a hot meal. And then I spotted Francesca, skiing down the piste that leads directly to the doorstep of the hotel. With effortless grace, she finally came to a standstill, glowing with pleasure.

"That girl is a natural," said an instructor. "I think she has Olympic potential. You'd better start saving some money!"

The following day Olivier suggested that we slip together. I know these chaps have their reputations to keep up, but I was relieved to find he was referring to learning how to slide down a slope sideways.

The week progressed well, and while I became confident on the nursery slopes, I still fell apart when I got up high. But towards the end of the holiday, I surprised myself by managing to complete a couple of blue runs, keeping my eyes off the mountain edges and on Olivier's bottom as instructed.

La Plagne is definitely not a resort for non-skiers, and isn't particularly hot for après-ski, but nonetheless there are still plenty of options for the evenings. The 1992 Winter Olympics bobsleigh run is worth a go, and then there's an ice-rink, swimming pool, snowboarding lessons and the chance of a Ski-doo ride.

Francesca and I preferred, like most in the group, to spend our evenings delighting in the entertainment around the hotel bar. After a fabulous dinner, we would all get revved up by the Warner staff and laugh our socks off.

● *Caroline Buchanan travelled with Ski Mark Warner (0171-393 3168). Among holidays available this season, seven nights at the chalethotel La Christina in La Plagne, departing Gatwick on March 15, cost £585 for an adult and £550 for a child aged five to ten, when they share a room. Price includes flights, transfers, bed and breakfast, afternoon tea and dinner. Manchester departures available for a supplement of £35 per person.*

● *For beginners, hire of skis and boots costs £57 per adult for the week and £38 per child. Lift pass is £106 per adult and £80 per child per week. Beginners can also book a Learn to Ski Pack. Adults pay £250 for six days' tuition, lift pass, ski and boot hire. Children pay £100 for tuition, but equipment hire and lift pass is not included.*

LEARNING TO SKI IN ASPEN

■ Tour operators: Those featuring Aspen include Ski the American Dream (0181-552 1201). Prices start at £697 in early April for scheduled flights and a week's B&B at the three-star Molly Gibson Lodge; February 14-March 14 is £747.

■ Crystal (0181-399 5144) has flights and a week's B&B at the Innsbruck Inn from £541 at the end of January. Thomson Holidays (0990 329329) has flights and a week's B&B at the Snowflake Inn from £485 until the end of February.

■ Getting there: American Airlines (0181-572 5555) flies to Dallas-Fort Worth, and Aspen Mountain Air flies onwards to Aspen. Prices for a through ticket booked with AA start at £612.30.

■ Accommodation: Sue Fox stayed at two hotels: The Hotel Aspen (001 970 925 3441) has an outdoor Jacuzzi and offers complimentary breakfast and après-ski buffet. Rates start at $139 (£84) per double room in January, rising to $179 (£108) in February.

■ Rates at Aspen Bed and Breakfast Lodge (970 925 7650) start at $129 (£77) in January including breakfast, pool and Jacuzzi.

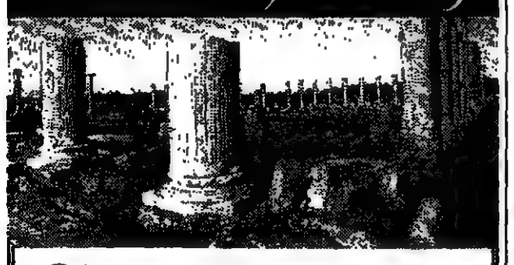
■ Learning to ski: Sue Fox was a guest of the Aspen Ski Company (970 925 1220), which owns Ski Schools of Aspen. Each mountain in Aspen has its own ski and/or snowboard school.

■ The beginner's mountains are Buttermilk (970 920 0788) and Snowmass (970 920 0788).

■ The three-day First Time on Skis programme costs $189 (£114), including lift tickets, lessons and equipment hire. The day goes from 10.15am to 3.15pm, with a break for lunch.

■ One day of snowboard lessons with no more than three people in the class costs $125 (£75); a three-day package, $345 (£208). Under-19s pay $189 (£113).

A Pillar of Society



Founded in the 12th century BC by Teucer, a hero returning from the Trojan wars, the ancient city of Salamis was the richest on the island with an amphitheatre built to seat 20,000. The remains of the ancient harbour, once a centre of commerce, can still be seen in the clear, shallow water.

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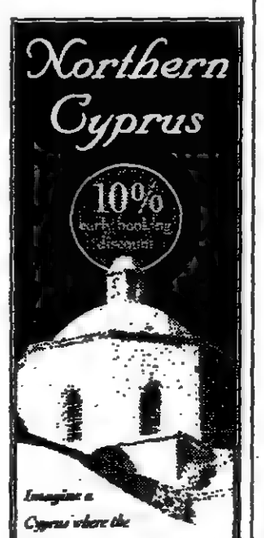

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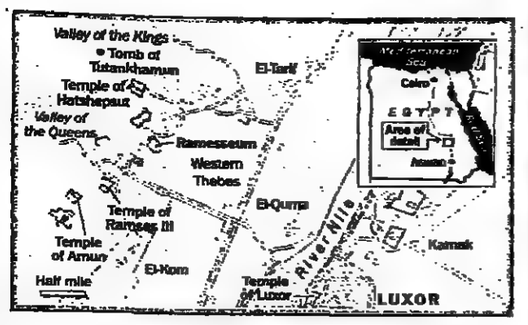
هكذا من الإصل

A tentative dip in the Nile

A trickle of tourists is slowly returning to Egypt after the Luxor massacre. Trevor Fishlock met some of them last week



HOW TO VISIT EGYPT

■ Trevor Fishlock travelled to Egypt with Bales Tours (01306 885991), which offers a nine-day Treasures of the Nile tour for between £699 and £1,098 per person, depending on the time of year. In February and March the tour costs £885. Prices are based on two sharing a room or cabin, and include flights, transfers, B&B accommodation in Cairo (four nights) and full board on the cruise (four nights).

■ Bales has offered tours to Egypt, the major part of its business, for 36 years and has been badly hit by cancellations.

■ Mandy Nickerson, deputy managing director, said that except for the first week after the atrocity, Bales did not cancel any tours. Security is a crucial consideration both for Bales, and clients are sent a copy of the advice issued by the Foreign Office.

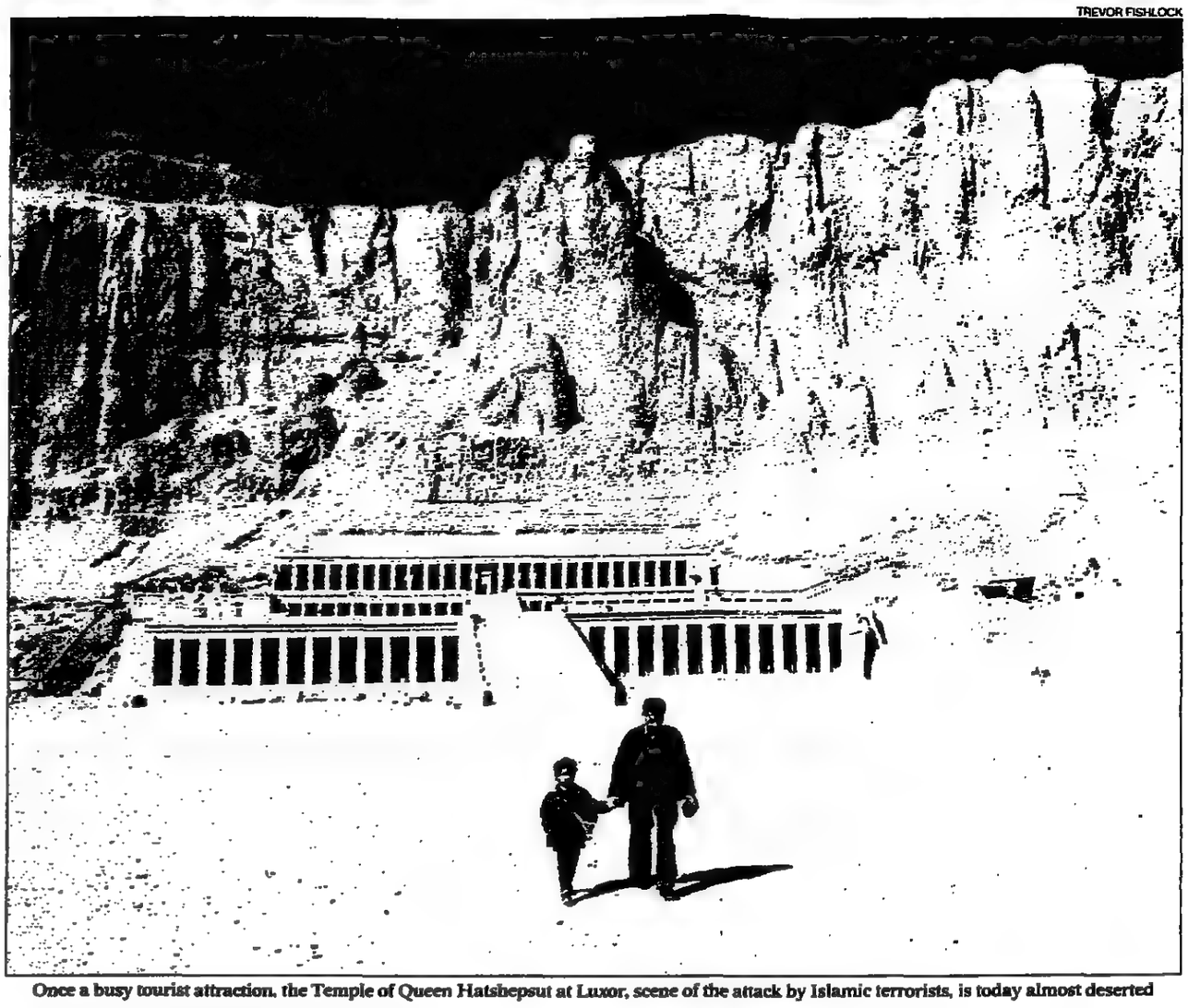
■ The Foreign Office advises visitors to be vigilant, and to respect advice from the local security authorities. "Since the Luxor incident, extremist groups have threatened further attacks against tourists: these threats should be taken seriously," says the FO. Further details: 0171-238 4503/4, or on the internet at *http://www.fco.gov.uk*

■ Red tape: British passport holders need a visa for Egypt. Until the end of February this is issued free; thereafter it will cost £15 per person. Call 0171-235 9719, or send an SAE for an application form to the Egyptian Consulate, 2 Lowndes Street, London SW1.

■ Guidebook choice: *Egypt Travel Survival Kit* (Lonely Planet, £11.99); *Egypt* (Rough Guides, £10.99).

■ Further information: Egyptian Tourist Office: 0891 600299 (premium rates).

TREVOR FISHLOCK



Once a busy tourist attraction, the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut at Luxor, scene of the attack by Islamic terrorists, is today almost deserted

Irene Bennett didn't hesitate for a moment. Among the lion-coloured hills of the west bank of the Nile she stood before one of the most beautiful of the pharaonic tombs of Egypt. Because its wall paintings are as delicate as they are vivid, the entrance fee is almost £20, a price set deliberately high to limit the number of visitors.

Mrs Bennett was not deterred. This was the holiday she had dreamt of for years. She paid up and treated herself to 15 minutes of pure enchantment in the tomb of Queen Nefertari. She had it to herself and emerged into the sunshine with a radiant smile.

"Worth every penny," she said. "The high point of my trip, and I have to say a high point among many."

Egypt, she explained, had been her passion since her schooldays. "I'm besotted. There is so much Egypt in my home — the ornaments and furnishings and my clothes with Egyptian designs — that my husband pulls my leg and says he feels he's living in a pharaoh's tomb.

"So I've always longed to visit Egypt and to cruise the Nile. But until now, I could never afford to come. Then I cashed in my Halifax shares and booked a trip with my sister Mavis. I can't tell you how excited I was."

The massacre of 58 tourists, including six Britons, by Islamic terrorists at Luxor last November led thousands of people to cancel their Nile journeys. Mrs Bennett thought hard. "My husband was worried. The official advice was to take care. I believed that the Egyptian authorities would improve the security and I reckoned, too, that we all face risks in everyday life.

"You can be blown up by terrorists in Britain. In the end, I thought the risk was acceptable, and I never seriously considered cancelling."

Mrs Bennett, who lives in Gillingham, Kent, was one of a group of eight people enjoying a Nile cruise organised by Bales Tours. Normally, in this high season time, Bales's group alone would have been 30 strong. But when I joined them aboard the steamer *Nile Romance* at Luxor, there were just 28 tourists, including the Bales group, on a ship with room for more than 100.

Three Welsh lawyers travelling with Bales had booked their cruise last July. They formed a lifelong friendship while at the University of Wales college in Aberystwyth in the early 1960s, and chose Egypt for a reunion jaunt.

"We felt we needed a respite from lawyer jokes," smiled Elgan Edwards, who has a practice in Chester.

Added David Davies, from Bromley: "After the shootings in Luxor, Bales offered us another tour in another country. We telephoned each other but there was never any doubt that we wanted to go to Egypt. We had never been before."

"We took our cue from Bales," said Huw James, from Cardiff. "If they were confident, then we were confident."

"We were sure the Government would beef up security," Edwards said, "and we've seen a strong police presence everywhere. We started in Cairo and one of the first things we saw was a sign in English in a shop window. It said: 'We Are Sorry About What Happened in Luxor.'"

Luxor was undeniably forlorn. The massacre at the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut on the west bank has devastated the economy. Almost every family here has someone in the tourist business. Dozens of

Excited: Irene Bennett

empty river steamers were berthed alongside the Nile banks, their crews and skippers laid off.

Flotillas of feluccas had not unfurled their sails for weeks. Drivers of taxis and horse-drawn caleches called out, but, I felt, only for form's sake. Many shops were shuttered and the hours hung heavy for staff in idle cafés.

In the deserted lobby of the Luxor Hilton, the piano, connected to an electronic pianola, played its romantic tunes, the keys and pedals moving as if played by a ghost: no one playing, no one listening.

By the time I met them, the British tourists aboard the *Nile Romance* had cruised downriver from Aswan to Luxor. On their excursions ashore they had been impressed and comforted by the presence of armed police. In Luxor, police with automatic rifles, some wearing armour over their dark blue uniforms, were posted at the airport, at hotel entrances, along the Nile corniche and at the gates of temples and museums.

We drove over the Nile bridge from Luxor to the west bank early one morning to see some of the hundreds of tombs in the great necropolis of ancient Thebes.

A sign in the Valley of the Kings invited us to "Look at the glory of the ancient"; and so we did, for here in the sand and rock lies the marvellous record of more than 3,500 years of history.

Visitors were few, and we had the luxury of unhurried tours of burial chambers set deep in the rugged hillsides, and could hear the explanation of the guide without a competing and distracting commentary. Guides are not permitted in the small tomb of Tutankhamun and we therefore had the pleasure of silence.

Hatshepsut's magnificent temple, one of the world's great and dramatic buildings, was well guarded, the high ridges above patrolled by police.

We ended the morning with a visit to a tomb in the Valley of the Queens, and couldn't help feeling sorry for the flocks of hawkers for whom pickings are so desperately thin.

Sabri Sameda, the group's tour guide, said that for Egyptians, the Luxor massacre was a matter of national shame. "People simply can't put themselves in the minds of the assassins, can't understand it. We are proud of our country and like to show it off to visitors, to be hospitable, and we all hope things will gradually improve."

Visits to the awesome temples of Luxor and Karnak completed our feast of marvels. We rode in caleches along the corniche for evening drinks at the splendid Winter Palace hotel, built in 1886, and extended our experience of its gracious style by having lunch next day on the sunny terrace. Some locals had hung a banner on the corniche with the message that Egypt is the land of security, tourism and peace.

I was glad I had time to visit Luxor's elegant museum and its new gallery exhibiting the cache of statues unearthed nearby nine years ago.

The last figures I saw were those of a king and queen, sitting side by side, her left hand resting on his back, a poignant gesture of affection which dissolved the centuries.

"The trip has been everything I hoped and more," Mrs Bennett said as we left Luxor. "Now I'm going to start saving. I can't wait to come back."

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Manchester – Paris	£68 BA	£348 BA
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London – Venice	£139 BA (ex-Heathrow)	£516 BA (ex-Heathrow)

Airline telephone numbers

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Notes
* Prices shown in the left-hand column are the lowest published excursion fares. Prices shown in the right-hand column are the lowest available flexible fares which do not require a Saturday night stay and which, in many cases, allow changes or cancellation without penalty. In all cases you are advised to check the restrictions, if any, when booking.
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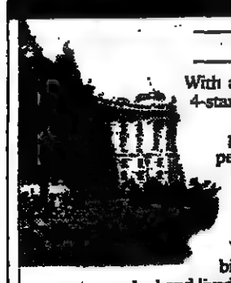

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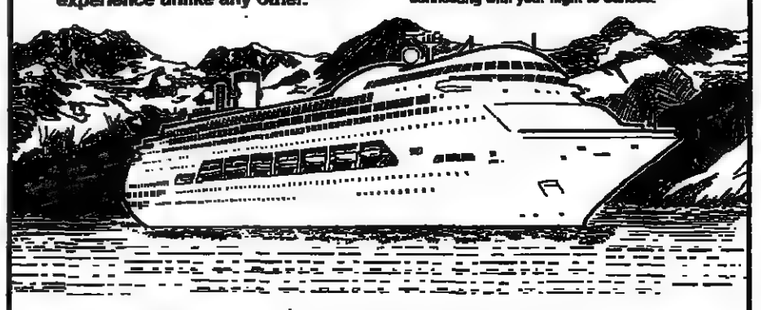

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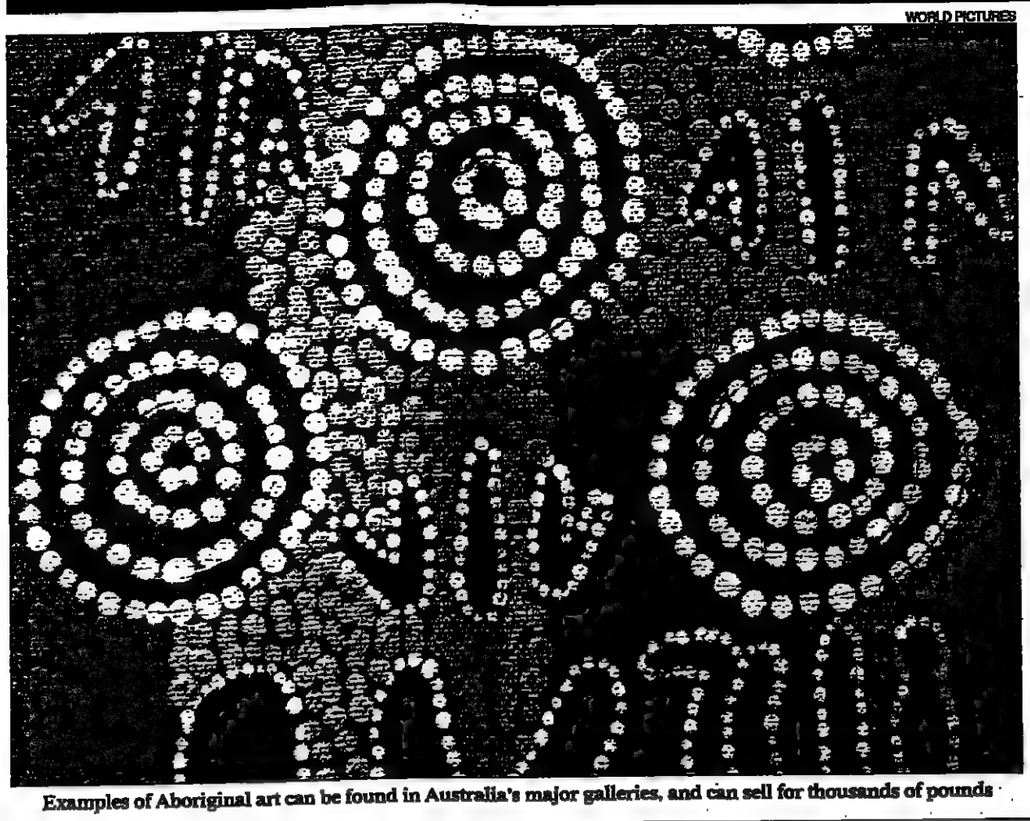
AUSTRALIA: THE OUTBACK

WORLD PICTURES



Examples of Aboriginal art can be found in Australia's major galleries, and can sell for thousands of pounds

Art from the heart

Simon Grosset discovers the creativity that thrives in the Outback

It is not often that you find the words "culture" and "Australian Outback" sitting comfortably in the same sentence. But when, last September, Dame Kiri te Kanawa sang to a crowd of 3,500 in South Australia's Yalkarinha Gorge, it seemed that the urban idea of culture had finally come to the Outback.

But it was not just the culture that had travelled — most of the audience had come from cities across Australia to hear the diva, and for many it was their first experience of the Outback. Even the "neighbours" came from Adelaide, 300 miles to the south.

Since this was Australia, few people bothered to dress for the occasion, and the priority was to stay warm in the outdoor auditorium. As much beer was drunk as wine and champagne.

The real locals, the families who live in this sparsely populated northern corner of South Australia, didn't bother with Dame Kiri. About 1,000 of them were gathered at a pub in Parachilna, ten miles away, for a performance by the popular Australian country singer, James Blundell.

Back in the gorge, Dame Kiri's concert was getting under way. A perfect example of the contrasts in Australian cultural life, her renditions from Puccini's *Tosca* and *Turandot* were interspersed with the voices of an Aboriginal choir.

The performance began at sunset with the Adnyamathanha Women's Choir singing a half-forgotten Dreaming song that tells the story of a mother's search for two missing children. At first, the choir was accompanied only by two galah birds in the gum trees. But within minutes the women were joined by the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and then by Dame Kiri's elevated vocals.

Meanwhile, the crowd at the country music concert was enjoying a different sort of evening out. One character, looking like an extra from *Crocodile Dundee*, explained that for him, "culture is all about people's relationship with the land. Country music is all about life out here." And James Blundell, with his songs of long-distance love and the vagaries of the land and climate, was singing the stories of his audience.

Culture in the Outback has always been like that. Ancient Aboriginal culture was based around the land, whether in the form of the rock and bark paintings that are still being found, or the songs and stories of the dreamtime.

Then came the early explorers and settlers, and late 19th-century poets such as Henry Lawson and Banjo Patterson. Their poems often took the form of bush ballads, the best known being the country's unofficial national anthem, *Waltzing Matilda*, which tells the story of a poor, lonely, itinerant worker, reduced to dancing with his bed-roll and stealing a sheep. Its popularity when it was written in 1895 suggests it struck a chord with the Outback's then inhabitants.

At the turn of the century came painters like Sir Hans Heyson, who travelled through the Flinders Ranges of South Australia producing works of art that now adorn major galleries around the world. He popularised the beauty of the vast and often desolate bush.

There is plenty of culture in the Outback, but since it is such a vast and sparsely populated place it is often as hard to find as the proverbial needle in a haystack. In their modest way, rural Australians don't seem to think that anybody but their neighbours will be interested in what they are organising.

The exception is Aboriginal art, which can be seen both *in situ* and in galleries in every major Australian city. While the rock art on display in places like Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territories is hundreds of years old, galleries like Gallerie Australis in Adelaide have a selection of modern art works for sale.

South Australian Aboriginal artist Ian Abdulla paints like a child, but his paintings have such charm that they change hands for thousands of pounds. *The Rodeo at Berri Football Oval at Night* is a 3ft-square canvas dominated by a yellow globe of light and little yellow stars of the night sky. Painted from memories of his childhood, the figures are primitive, but the composition mature.

In contrast, most modern European-style painting in the Outback is dominated by the style of Sir Hans Heyson. At Hawker, in the shade of his beloved Flinders Ranges, they hold an annual art exhibition. "It's open to anyone," Joy Boettger of the exhibition committee explained. "We have 735 professional, amateur and first-time exhibits here, with the most expensive painting selling for £1,400."

The exhibition, held every September, was a homage to Heyson. Almost all the subject matter was the landscape of the Flinders, with its gum trees and red soil, its decaying woodsheds and battered hats. More than anything else, it showed the popularity of the week-long painting holidays that are a mainstay of the local tourist economy.

Back at the Prairie Hotel in Parachilna, a local amateur band had taken to the stage and the audience was bopping to classic hits belted out at high volume. In the bar, the beer was flowing, people jabbering, hats somehow still on heads. The real culture of the outback was alive and well, if a little inebriated.

CULTURE FILE

An artist at work on a woven basket

■ Simon Grosset travelled to Australia with Air New Zealand (0181-741 2399). Flights to Adelaide (via Sydney) in February cost £1,334 (including taxes) from the Airline Network (01772 727727). In June, prices fall to £1,089.

■ Where to go: The Hawker Art Exhibition is held in the third week of September in the Hawker Institute, 200 miles north of Adelaide. The Thorn Park Country House (tel and fax 00 618 8843 4269) is halfway between Adelaide and Hawker.

■ Gallerie Australis (00 618 8231 4111; fax 00 618 8231 0616) is at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, North Terrace, Adelaide.

■ When to go: Prices are higher from December to February. However, it is also very hot. June, July and August are cooler.

■ Further information: see the fact file on page 27.

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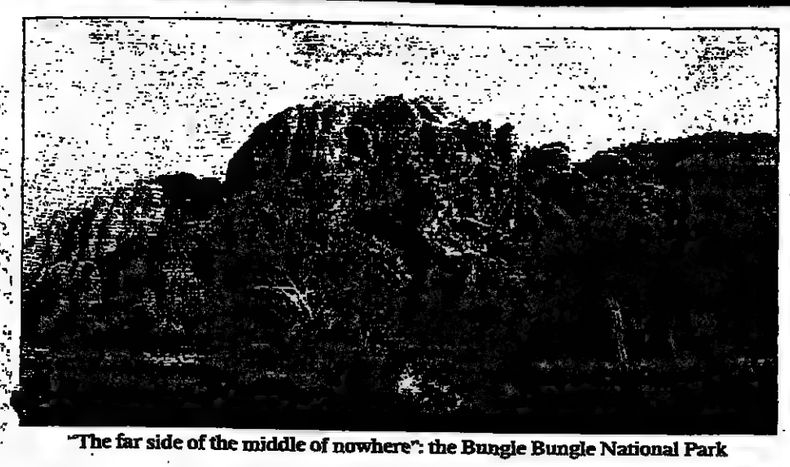
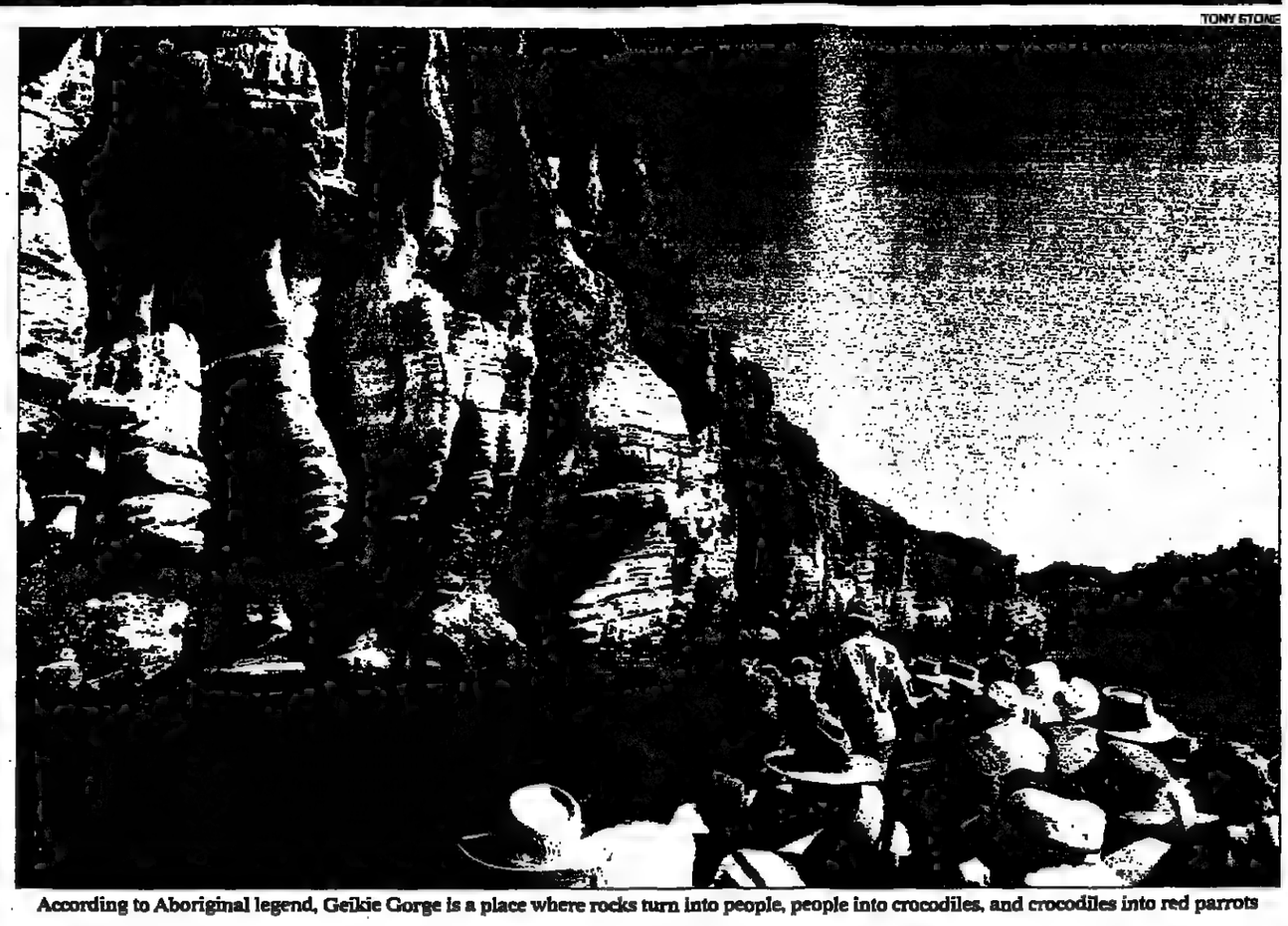
AUSTRALIA: THE OUTBACK



"The far side of the middle of nowhere": the Bungle Bungle National Park

TONY STONE



According to Aboriginal legend, Geikie Gorge is a place where rocks turn into people, people into crocodiles, and crocodiles into red parrots

At the edge of civilisation

Stephen McClarence follows the swagman's trail on an odyssey across the vast wilds of the Outback

Deep in the Outback of beyond, a battered bus screeches to a halt and a voice snarls out of the dust: "You bastards' goin' on the tour?"

The dust clears to reveal a man as battered as the bus. Peter Ross, cattle rancher and undertaker, early seventies, no teeth, stubble, belly flapping over his shorts, waddling in flip-flops, hat like a dead wallaby. He could be W.C. Fields's Outback brother.

"Sorry I haven't changed my clothes," he barks. "Had to pick up a corpse last night. I was so bored I sat her up in the front seat and talked to her." Locals mythology reckons he stacks the corpses in his deep freeze and packs frozen chickens around them.

"Great morning. With weather like this, you wouldn't be dead for 30 bob a week, would you?"

The Outback scorches sensitivities. Ask Michael Curr, owner of a million-acre cattle station, about the Saturday night movies at Christmas Creek.

"They were run by a man called John Motter. He called his sons John Wayne Motter and Clint Eastwood Motter, so you can tell what sort of films he showed."

Curr, a burly man in his sixties, pours himself another rum. He's in no hurry. This is one of his best stories.

"Motter used to fly the films in on the meat plane and show them in an open air cinema. It was fine until John Wayne's last film came out. At the end of it, an Indian was creeping up on Wayne and a dog started barking in the audience. Motter got his revolver out, shot the Indian, shot the dog and blew the bloody projector out. What was the point in carrying on?"

Curr runs Old Mornington cattle station in The Kimberley, a highland area the size of Poland in Western Australia — "two hundred miles from the nearest town and you don't pass another house on the way."

What you do pass is scrub, skeletal trees, spindly bushes, everything pared back and bare in a landscape unimaginably vast and empty. Hot sun and red dust.

Curr knew it at its bleakest. He was a swagman, trekking through the Outback with his belongings rolled up in a bedroll, or swag. Life is easier now, despite his 7,000 cows and million acres.

A million acres? A mere smallholding. There are cattle stations here as big as England. The cows are rounded up by helicopter. "We don't breed cattle, we harvest game," says Curr. "They're feral bloody cattle here."

Feral bloody country, too. Western Australia, its scattered residents like to point out, is big enough to swallow Western Europe *and* Texas. They celebrate its remoteness.

"We used to get the post flown in every six weeks. You'd get the bill, the reminder and the summons in the same post. Now we get the post every Thursday, so you can't put off paying."

The Kimberley's mountain ranges, creeks and gorges give it a rare, rugged beauty. This is one of the last frontiers of Australian tourism, and getting there needs a bit of thought.

Perth is where we start our five-day adventure. With its riverside setting, the city has a provincial reputation — a big village with a lot of money and an awful lot of boats.

The suburbs include the richest kilometre of real estate in Australia. The houses are so grand they have pillars and porticos around their back doors. The restaurant where we dine — one of 2,000 in the city — serves "fresh lambs' brains" and kangaroo. Sliced on a plate, it is the only marsupial I see all week.

From here, we fly 1,000 miles north, over a scorched landscape snaking with dried-up riverbeds, to Broome, the small town that produced 80 per cent of the world's mother-of-pearl until plastic buttons all but killed off the industry.

Broome is now a holiday town. Visitors come for the beaches, the coconut palms and the startling turquoise of the Indian Ocean. And for "Broome-time", the ultimate relaxation. The town is like High Noon at five to twelve. Its heartbeat is so slow it could qualify for a pacemaker.

> 'What do five stars mean when millions twinkle overhead?'

The main attraction is Sun Pictures, which opened in 1916 and claims to be the world's oldest operating "picture garden" — the sort of open-air cinema where John Motter showed John Wayne and shot the dog. Rows of low-slung deckchairs face a screen fronting the corrugated iron toilets.

Steven Spielberg's *Lost World* is being trailed at twilight. Fruit bats flit across a screen of dinosaurs. Mosquitos buzz. Peeling portraits of Dietrich and Lon Chaney Jnr hang in the foyer.

Half a century ago, the audiences were multi-cultural. Broome's pearling made it almost a southeast Asian town. All races went to the pictures — and were segregated on arrival. Whites sat in the centre, Japanese and Chinese behind, Malays, Filipinos and Aborigines down the side.

We stay at Eco Beach, a pleasant, back-to-nature resort built by Karl Plunkett, a former Isle of Man plumber. This is where the ecologically conscious take bio-holidays, so don't bring portable fridges; don't take sea shells; don't expect five-star luxury.

"What do five stars mean when millions twinkle overhead? People want to come on holiday, but you want to do it with minimal impact on the environment," says Plunkett, a one-time backpacker.

We reminisce about the Fairy Glen in the Isle of Man, and the sun sets with Wagnerian splendour — streaked reds and golds and purples as though God has gone mad with the paintpots.

Hundreds of galahs, pink and grey cockatoos, flock across the sky, screeching. Shooting stars flash across the Milky Way.

The Outback starts next morning, at 5.30am on a six-seater Cherokee plane. The pilot Charlie-Whisky-Bravos and Foxtrot-Oscars his way along the top of the Great Sandy Desert to Fitzroy Crossing, an airport with two sheds and a lavatory.

Peter Ross's bus takes us to Geikie Gorge, whose towering limestone cliffs have been battered into abstraction by torrents of floodwater. An Aboriginal guide tells Dreamtime stories about rocks that turn into people, people who turn into crocodiles and crocodiles that turn into red-winged parrots.

We fly on to the Bungle Bungle National Park, a great fortress of red rock with 5,000-year-old stencilled handprints in its gorges. Termites' nests dot the landscape.

We are on the far side of the middle of nowhere, but we haven't finished yet. The pilot steers the Cherokee through gorges, and lands on the dirt strip at Mornington Station. Michael Curr is waiting with his truck. The stillness is broken only by birdsong.

We eat dinner cooked by a couple who moved here after ten years running a Sydney takeaway, opening at 4am to sell breakfast to late-night drunks. Their gravy is thick enough to serve as pâté. We brew bush tea by a billabong, the sort of waterhole where swagmen camped and sang *Waltzing Matilda*. Somewhere in the far distance, there is the sound of a buzzing mosquito. It gets louder and louder, and suddenly the Cherokee rounds the creek and soars over us, 30 feet up.

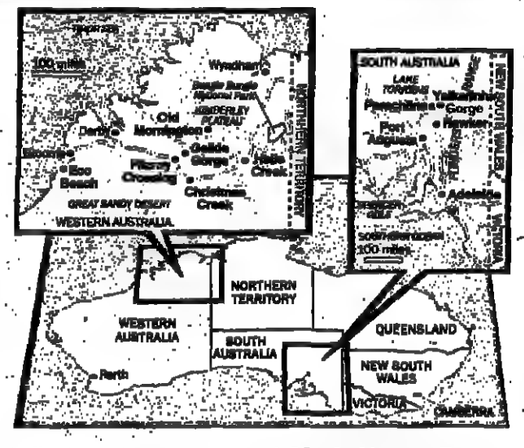
It is Michael Curr, out for a spin. An exhilarating moment — John Wayne would have loved it.

DOWN UNDER: THE DETAILS

■ Stephen McClarence travelled to Western Australia with Qantas, the Australian Tourist Commission and the Western Australian Tourist Commission.

■ Qantas (0345 747767) has return flights from Heathrow to Perth from £629-£895 (excluding taxes). Perth-Broome is currently £200 return with a Boomerang Pass, available from Qantas, which gives discounts on internal flights.

■ The Kimberley can be toured by chartered plane or four-wheel drive. Details from the WATC (0171-240 2881). Air operators include Slingair Heliwork (00 618 91 691300). East Kimberley Tours, Bungle Bungle (00 618 91 682213) runs tours from £57 per person per day. Danggu Heritage Tours (00 618 91 915121) has five-hour Geikie Gorge tours at £34 per person.



■ Hotels: Hyatt Regency, Perth (00 618 9225 1234) has double rooms from £77 per person. Mangrove Hotel, Broome (00 618 9192 1303): £45 for double room. Eco Beach (00 618 9192 4844): roomy chalets from £23 per person per day. Old Mornington Station (00 618 9191 7035): comfortable campsite from £38 per person per day including breakfast, lunch & dinner.

■ Best time to visit: The dry season lasts from April until November — temperatures around 30C. The wet season is even hotter.

■ Visas: Tourist visas for British passport holders, valid for three months, are free; application forms available from most travel agents. Or apply in person at the Australian High Commission (0171-379 4334). Some travel agents can issue visas on the spot.

■ Guidebook choice: *Outback Australia* (Lonely Planet, £13.99, second edition published next month). *Australia* (Lonely Planet, £14.99). *Australia* (Rough Guides, £13.99).

■ Further information: Australian Tourist Commission (0181-780 2229). Western Australian Tourist Commission (0171-240 2881).

■ Further information: the Aussie Helpline on 0891 070707 (49p a minute). For brochures, call the Aussie Brochure Line (0891 633235, also premium rate).

WEBWORLD

FOR A straightforward introduction to Australia, visit *http://www.travelaustralia.com.au/intro.html* writes Susannah Jowitt.

The Australia and New Zealand section of the Travel Mall is at *http://www.oztravel.com.au/travelmall/destinations/OutbackQLD.html* and can now offer SSL-encrypted secure bookings.

Try the Grand Australian Explorer coach trip (from £3,355) at *http://www.ui.com.au/downunder/safari—a—gae—44.htm*, or 4WD, air, and motorbike safaris (from around £1,225) for 11 days, such as those offered at *http://www.a4r.com/v4205.htm*

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Happy landing in Hong Kong ...virtually

The skies are safe. **Cath Urquhart**, *Times* travel editor, tries to fly a jumbo but never leaves Gatwick

The airport runway lights blinked up at me out of the darkness. Below me were the inky waters of Victoria Harbour, and beyond, the skyscrapers of Hong Kong island, twinkling in the night. I had been intending to land on the runway, but alarmingly, it was crossing my screen from left to right instead of top to bottom. At this rate it looked as if I would shoot across it and end up in the harbour.

"Ease her nose up," instructed flight engineer Ray Maidment, admirably keeping the panic out of his voice. I pulled the control column towards me, and turned it to the right to set our course for the runway of Kai Tak airport, one of the trickiest approaches in the world. The lights seemed terribly close, the runway terribly short. Would we land safely — or would our Boeing 747-200 plough into the murky harbour waters?

Climbing from the flight simulator's cockpit ten minutes later, I felt pretty chuffed, if a bit dizzy. We had landed so softly that no one in Virgin Atlantic's upper class would have spilled a single drop of champagne. "For a first-timer, that was exceptional," Ray said, kindly. I expect he says that to all his dizzy first-timers, but I didn't care.

Two-storey beast: Virgin's 747 simulator at Gatwick

Ray has landed at Kai Tak more times than most, if you count actual and virtual landings. After 42 years as a flight engineer with BOAC, then British Airways and Virgin, he has semi-retired and now instructs enthusiasts and would-be pilots in a flight simulator used by Virtual Aviation.

The company was set up last year by James Stevenson, a 24-year-old entrepreneur and aviation enthusiast, after he spotted a gap in the market. There are dozens of flight simulators up and down the country, used by airlines to train their pilots. But they are so expensive — a new one is £15 million or more plus running costs — that when airlines have not booked pilots in for training, they are happy for Virtual Aviation to sell sessions.

The Virgin Atlantic Boeing 747 that I test-flew is called the Lofty Lady — her name is emblazoned on her side — and is based on an industrial site near Gatwick airport. Waiting for my turn, I stood inside the hangar that houses the two-storey beast, which, swaying on six powerful hydraulic jacks, looked like an escaped monster from the set of *Star Wars*.

Whoever was flying her seemed to be having a tricky landing, as the angular white Portakabin-on-legs tilted from side to side, sometimes dropping a metre or more on its hydraulic haunches, at other times shooting back up suddenly. Just watching began to make me feel queasy.

Once inside, I took the pilot's seat on the right-hand side of the cockpit, with Ray next to me and James in the flight engineer's seat behind us. It was pretty cosy — there is not much room once the chair is clicked into position — and rather overpowering, as on every exposed surface are buttons, switches, knobs, dials and blinking lights.

Fortunately, only real pilots need to know what they are all for — fly-by-nights need to know only the basics, which consist of the foot-operated rudder pedals (for steering the plane on the ground), and the control column, which guides the plane in the air. And you should keep an eye on the main dial, which depicts a little orange aeroplane on an artificial horizon, and shows if you are heading up or down, left or right. My artificial horizon seemed to be an artificial vertical whenever I managed a panic-stricken glance at it.

"We are going to open the throttle and go down the runway using the rudders," Ray said, setting off at fearsome speed using his controls. "At 140 knots, you must pull back on the control column until the orange aeroplane symbol reaches 15 degrees, with the wings level. Level. LEVEL. When we reach our maximum height we lower the nose by pushing forward on the control column until we are at about five degrees." Well, while it wasn't exactly simple, but it was great fun and soon felt reasonably manageable. Once I got used to the steering column, correcting our position in a nosedive became easier.

And the sensation of flying is superbly recreated — a wrap-around video screen in the windshield recreates a 3-D view of the chosen city and airport; the cockpit reverberates with the noise that four engines would make; and the machine shudders and jolts just as a real plane would.

The realism extends to scrupulous engineering checks — if a simulator is not kept in perfect working order, the Civil Aviation Authority can withdraw its licence, just as with planes.

Pilots using them for commercial training may go straight from the simulator to landing the real thing; and they can also be used to recreate in-flight problems to see how they could better be tackled in future.

"We get people from all walks of life trying the simulator," James said. "One person bought 15 hours to give to colleagues in a corporate bonding session, some are celebrating birthdays. Others can fly light aircraft and want to see what it is like to fly a jumbo. The more experience they have of flying, the more they can do in their session — for example, they can fly into turbulence."

My first flight was dramatic enough without anything nasty like that. There was only one difficulty. When I tried to move my seat back to get out after landing, the lever had stuck and I had to execute an unseemly scramble over the bank of thrust levers to get out of the cockpit. Next time I will have to find out how to use the ejector seat.

CHRIS HARRIS

Guided by flight instructor Ray Maidment, Cath Urquhart brings Lofty Lady to a smooth halt on the simulator's virtual runway at Kai Tak airport

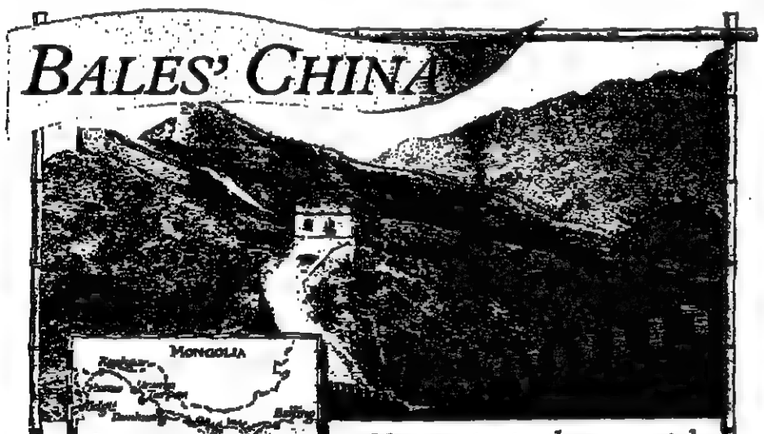
FLIGHT FILE

■ Simulator flights cost between £150 and £395 with Virtual Aviation (01223 300300, fax 01223 300900). After a briefing, you can spend between 20 minutes (£150) and one hour (£395) flying the plane, and you can try landing at various airports including Heathrow, JFK in New York, Kai Tak, and Sydney. Hour-long sessions can be split for example, a group of three could each have 20 minutes' flying time and then spend the other 40 minutes in the cockpit watching their colleagues.

■ There are various types of aircraft simulators available at different locations. For example, you can fly Boeings, an Airbus A320 and other aircraft at Gatwick; a Lockheed Tristar at Bournemouth; a DC9 at High Wycombe; and a Boeing 737 at Knaresborough in North Yorkshire or at Oxford airport.

■ The minimum age is 14. Anyone with limited mobility may find the cockpit cramped, even when the seat is not stuck. You may take photographs inside, but video cameras are not allowed.

BALES' CHINA



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AROUND THE WORLD A WEEKEND GUIDE

TRAVEL TIPS by Jill Crawshaw

TRAVEL JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR

Painters' views of Italy

WALKING tours in June and October with the Alternative Travel Group (01865 315665) will complement the *Italy in the Age of Turner* exhibition at the Dulwich Picture Gallery (0181-693 8000) from March 4 to May 24. Like the exhibition, the tours chart the rediscovery of Italy by British artists after the Napoleonic wars.

The eight-day trips, with three to four hours walking each day, visit the painters' locations in Venice, Rome, the monastery of St Benedict at Subiaco and Civitella where Penry Williams, Samuel Palmer, Edward Lear and others painted the Serpentara countryside.

The tour costs £1,375 for accommodation, all meals with wine and entry fees but excluding return air fares from the UK, which add £275-£295. If you want to create your own masterpiece, you might prefer to join one of the Alternative Travel Group's painting workshops based at Pieve a Castello, a 9th-century former convent near Siena. With tuition by David Barker, the weeks in September and October cost £1,100, excluding air fares.

WINNIE the Pooh goes on holiday. The bear will be the star of a musical, *Winnie the Pooh and Friends*, at Disneyland Paris from April 1 to September 27. High season (March 30 to October 31) entrance for the whole park, which includes this show, costs about £21 for adults, £16 for three to 11-year-olds. Call 0990 030303 for information.

Retreating women

MORE than 400 retreats in Britain, Ireland, France and Spain, with an average cost of £37 per day, are listed by Stafford Whiteaker in his new edition of *The Good Retreat Guide* (Rider Books, £12.99), to be published on February 5. "There are retreats for everyone — mother and baby retreats, family retreats, gay and lesbian retreats — even weekend retreats which are very popular with working women who may otherwise have no time to concentrate on themselves," he says. Buddhist, meditation, gardening and nature retreats are also becoming popular.

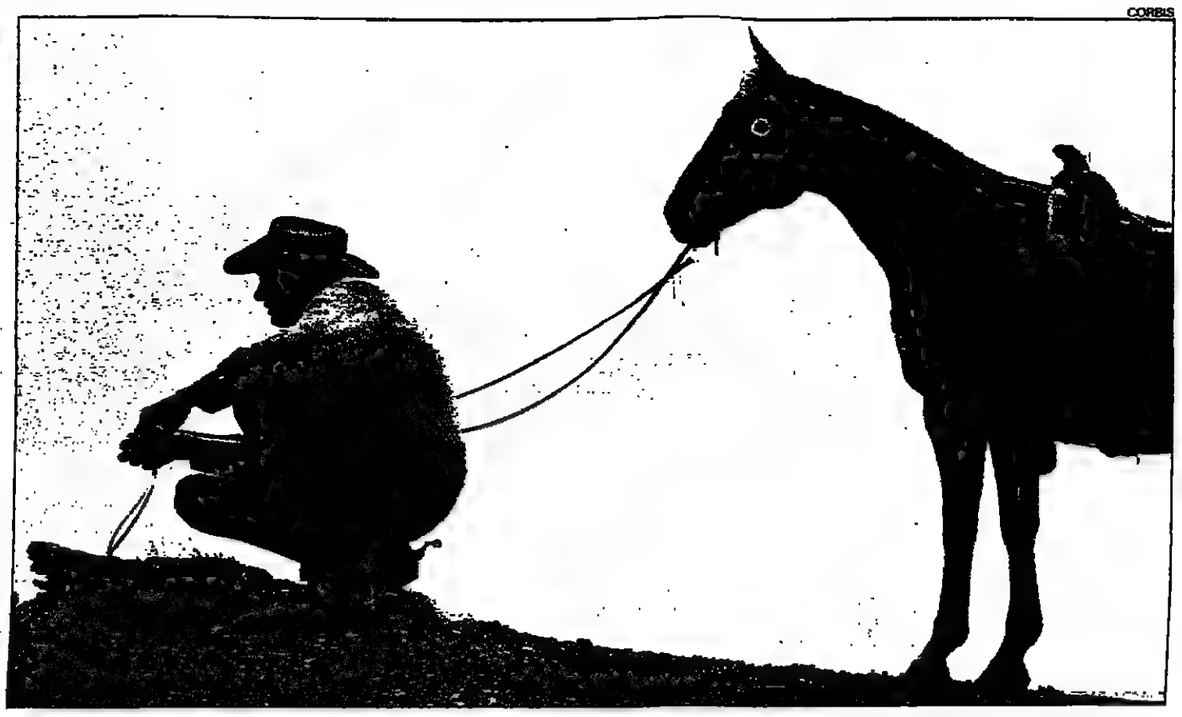
KUONI (01306 740500) has a new Far East brochure to Thailand reflecting the devaluation of the baht, and to Hong Kong where tourism has plummeted since the Chinese takeover. Three nights in Hong Kong (accommodation only) at the Metropole Hotel is £399 until March 22; three nights in Bangkok at the Asia Hotel is £445 to £546 from June until August 10. Flights are included.

Helping hands

NATIONAL Trust conservation projects need volunteers to help sculptors set up the world's largest temporary Sculpture Trail in West Yorkshire from June 6-13. And from June 19-26, help will be needed for an open-air 1940s dance at Chartwell in Kent where Winston Churchill once lived.

The Trust lists 400 projects in its 1998 Working Holidays brochure (0891 517751 — a premium rate number — or write, enclosing two first-class stamps, to: National Trust Working Holidays, PO Box 84, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 1ZP). Volunteers, aged between 17 and 70, are expected to pay about £45 a week towards "modestly comfortable" board and lodging.

CORBIS



CALLING ALL would-be cowboys and cowgirls: The city of Calgary in Alberta, Canada, has declared 1998 its Year of the Cowboy, with rodeos, country music, readings of cowboy poetry, a cowboy church service and learn-to-be-a-cowboy holidays. The Calgary Stampede from July 3-12 will be a highlight of this foot-stomping festival. It has been running for more than 80 years and draws the crowds so be sure to book ahead.

It is not all history, either. Although the golden age of the working cowboys was the 1880s, they are still in demand today. The Canadian Tourist Office reckons that Canadian ranches developed in a more orderly fashion than those in the United States, because many of the ranchers were men of education from Britain who brought upper-class Victorian ideas with them.

All-Canada Travel & Holidays (01502 585825) is offering a 12-day self-drive holiday, the Real Cowboy Experience, from £1,172 to £1,205 which includes car hire, 11 nights' accommodation in ranches and lodges, trail riding and other activities and most meals (return flights to Calgary add approximately £500). For further information phone the Visit Canada Centre (0891 715000), a premium-rate (50p/min) line.

Le Valais, painted around 1940, estimated £400-£600.

Artistic flair on the slopes

An auction of old ski posters should prove profitable

Franz Lenhart's 1930s poster, estimated to fetch £600-£800

IF YOU have any old ski posters they could pay for next year's winter holiday. Christie's in South Kensington is auctioning more than 200 winter sport posters from 1895-1970; estimates range from £200 to £5,000.

One, expected to fetch up to £3,500, is a poster from the 1900s by Francisco Tamagno promoting an international contest in Chamonix; it shows a couple leaping off a mountain; the woman carries no poles, is on wooden skis and wearing a skirt.

Another, *Les Sports d'hiver en Italie* by Franz Lenhart (estimate £600-£800), shows the long skis and style of downhill racers in the 1930s. The only poster of Klosters, where winter sport tourism began in 1904, is expected to reach £500-£700. The sale is on February 6 at 10.30am. For details contact Christie's (0171-581 7611).

Travellers gather to tell their tales

Meet some of the country's most adventurous travellers and hear talks on subjects including travel writing and photography, at the Independent Traveller's World Show in London next weekend. Dozens of travel companies including tour operators, guidebook publishers and specialist equipment firms will take stands at the three-day event, at the London Arena Exhibition Centre in Docklands.

In the programme of talks — on everything from climbing in Portugal to travelling on horseback through Mongolia — there is also the chance to hear contributors to the *Times'* travel pages. Edward Marriott will be speaking about Papua New Guinea and Tom Griffiths, Young Travel Writer of the Year, will talk about making the most of a gap year. On Saturday afternoon, *Times* travel editor Cath Urquhart will chair a panel discussing how to break into travel writing.

The talks are free, but there are also day-long seminars, including one on Women and Travel at £35.

Admission to Independent Traveller's World is £3 on Friday, (when it is open from 12 noon to 7pm), and £5 next Saturday (10am-6pm) and Sunday (10am-5pm).

Advance tickets are £2-£4. Admission to the talks is free, but 25 per cent of talk tickets will be pre-bookable at £5 each. For details, call 0171-341 6691.

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We've set two new endurance records: one for driving; the other for putting up with a ZZ Top CD for 18,344 miles.
Loaded the Frontera onto an overnight cross-channel ferry (an outlandish thing to do) nestled there amongst the booze laden family saloons). Whistled up to Greenwich - where the whole crazy trip kicked off in October - to take our place in the record books. All in all, it's been an amazing experience, and our four-wheeled friend hasn't missed a beat. She's seen us through some hairy moments; three foot deep potholes in Turkey, floods in India, and frozen Arctic wasteland. It'll seem a bit odd sleeping in a real bed for a change, and we'll probably all miss trying to grab some shut eye in the cramped area behind the back seat. One thing I won't be sorry to see the back of though, is the thumping beat of "Sharp Dressed Man".

THE FRONTERA FROM VAUXHALL

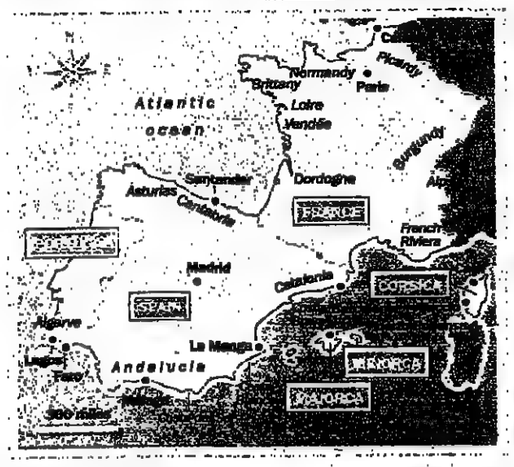
هكذا من الإصل

SUMMER SUN 1998: SELF-CATERING IN SPAIN

Ideal homes for a holiday

STEVE KEENAN

Our pick of dream Spanish hideaways kicks off three pages of the best self-catering summer breaks



FALLING OUT of bed into a pool by the patio is easy in Spain. Purpose-built whitewashed villas, relatively cheap and close to beaches and supermarkets, are spreading the length of the costas. But the pools are often tiny and many families still prefer apartment complexes for the larger pools and on-site catering. The best properties are in the hills of Catalonia and Andalucia, where villas were built to live in and are now rented out. Few holiday homes in the north, "green" Spain, have pools. While the houses may be rustic, many families will not want to have to drive to the beach to cool off.

THE BALEARICS

THE widest choice — from basic apartments through to simple, whitewashed cottages *and five-star villas — is in the* Balearic islands. Cosmos has entered the villa-with-pool market this year, featuring Majorca, Minorca, Costa Blanca and Lanzarote. A typical three-bedroomed villa at Cala'n Bosch in Minorca costs £349 in May, £509 in August, based on six sharing (see page 32 for all operators' telephone numbers).

The resorts of Puerto Pollensa and Alcudia are the best in Majorca for self-catering, with good accommodation away from the louder resorts. Panorama Holidays offers the Apartments Habitat in Pollensa, for £259 in May, £499 in August, based on four sharing. Habitat is a complex of 110 apartments around three pools. The Travel Club of Upminster has villas with pools close to Pollensa. Despite washing machines and satellite TV, these are traditional stone cottages. From £428 in May, £598 in August.

For active children, Casa Faronati, near Ciutadella in Minorca, sleeps five and has a pool and football field. In May, £590; August, £1,390 (villa only) from Vintage Travel.

THE COSTAS

SMALL villas and apartments proliferate along the Spanish coast, particularly the Costa *del Sol in the south, and the* Costa Brava north of Barcelona.

In between, the Costa Blanca is a growth area for Meon Villas, one of several operators, including Barwell Leisure, that feature La Manga resort. This offers three golf courses and 18 tennis courts, plus a huge selection of apartments. Meon has a four-bedroomed property sleeping eight, for example, for £471 in May, £620 August.

MEON believes it could have sold more top-end villa holidays in Majorca last summer, given availability. But there is no shortage, it says, in Andalucia and the Costa del Sol. Meon, Vintage Travel, Simply Spain, Individual Travellers and Spanish Collection have extensive portfolios in the area. Spain at Heart features only this region.

In the hills behind the coast, villas nestle on ravines, within the whitewashed *pueblos* (villages) or overlooking farmland. Cheap charter flights make Malaga's hinterland an attractive self-catering choice. La Casa de Mimosa near Gaucin is two hours from Málaga. Sleeping six, the house is set in seven acres of fig, almond, eucalyptus and fruit trees with a pool. Through Spain at Heart it costs £2,065 in May, £2,815 in August — villa only.

The same firm has the Casita de Don Pedro, which sleeps four, set among olive groves and orchards and reached by a wooden bridge across a stream. In May, it costs £925; August, £1,245.

THE Catalan government has followed the French in developing a gite programme to encourage rural tourism. But these are more upmarket than the French. Strict guidelines insist that the house be typical of the region: usually substantial farmhouses with pantiled roofs, and a supply of honey, wine and other local produce is often available. Owners frequently offer to cook.

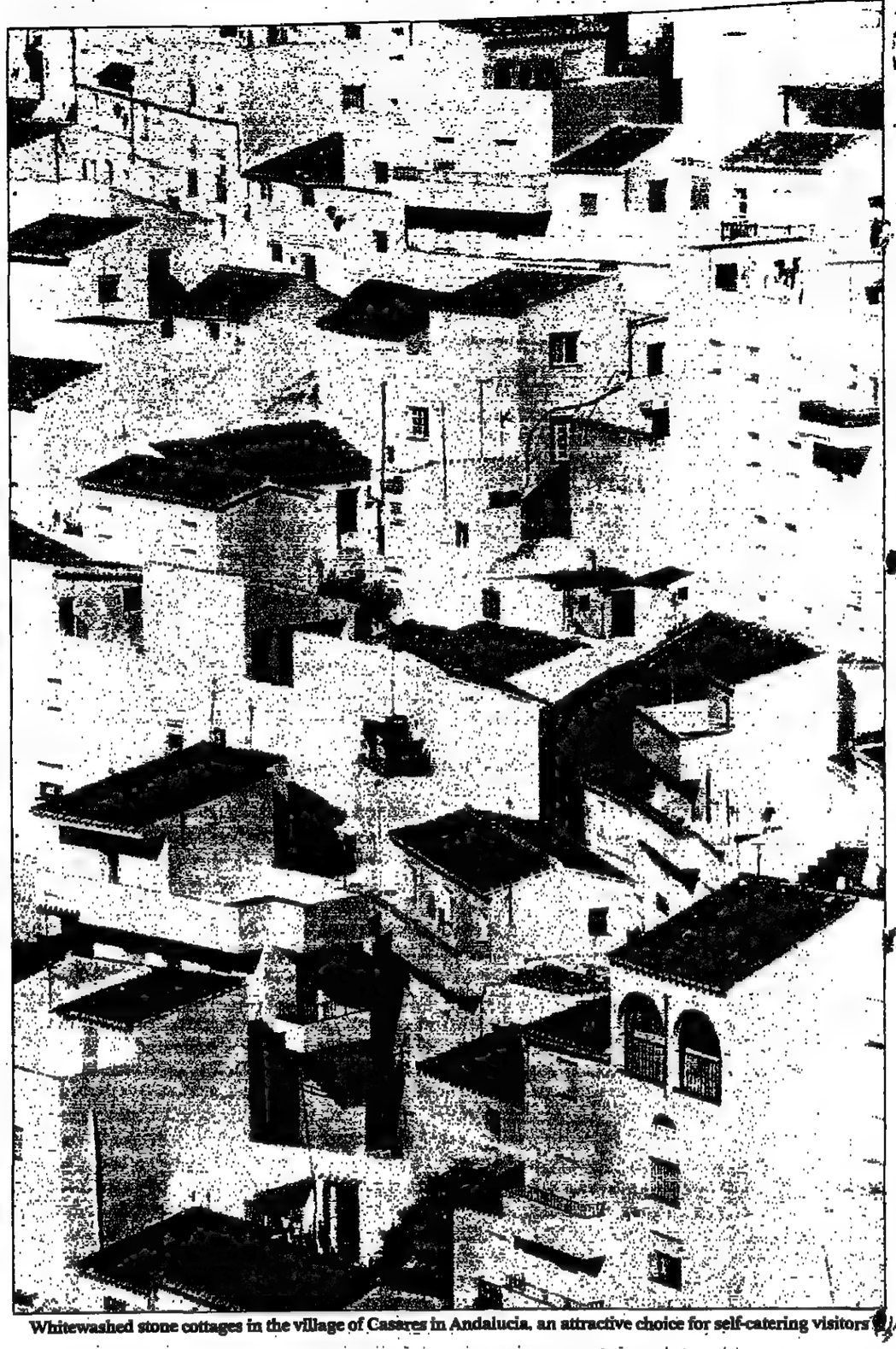
Individual Travellers features a 17th-century house in the village of Juia, 15 miles from the beach and ten miles from Girona airport. With arched windows and courtyard, the house sleeps eight for £1,100 in May, £1,546 in August — house and car hire only. Vintage Travel also features gites, known locally as *masias*. The vast Casa Miralles sleeps up to 12 and has a dining table for 18. It is seven miles from Cardona and set in 200 acres, with pool. House-only price: £1,150 in May; £1,790, August.

BRITTANY Ferries has opened up the northern regions of Cantabria and Asturias with its ferry route to Santander. The company offers holiday homes in the hills (*casas*), seaside apartments and villas with pools. The weather is volatile, however, hence the name green Spain. Most are small, functional, family-sized homes within two hours of the port and often close to a beach. Linen, towels and fuel, often including firewood, are included. A two-bedroomed renovated mill near Torrelavega, 12 miles from the beach and sleeping four, costs £165 in May, £308 in August — house only. Casas Cantabricas also has a programme dedicated to cottage holidays in northwest Spain, while Individual Travellers has a section on the area in its main brochure.

Other operators to Spain: Club Cantabrica, CV Travel, Freelance Holidays-Majorca, Holiday Villas, Mundi Color, Lanzarote Leisure, Manos Holidays, Prestige Holidays, Something Special, Spanish Harbour Holidays, Thomas Cook Villas with Pools.

● *The two-week prices given for Spanish holidays are per person, including flights, unless otherwise stated. Operators' telephone numbers are listed on page 32.*

TONY STONE



Whitewashed stone cottages in the village of Casares in Andalucia, an attractive choice for self-catering visitors

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SUMMER SUN 1998: SELF-CATERING IN FRANCE

The French reconnection

A good exchange rate and improved accommodation ensures a comeback for France, says Steve Keenan

TWO summers ago, it looked as if the British had fallen out of love with the gite holiday. With sterling down by 25 per cent against the franc, even Francophiles were no longer prepared to pay heavily for what was often little more than an amenity free holiday in a converted farm outbuilding. The numbers taking a main summer holiday in France plunged by a quarter in 1996, to 1.86 million, from 2.42 million in 1992. Many switched to camping or opted for the value offered by Florida or Turkey.

But now France is fashionable again. Ferry price competition and a strong exchange rate — back to FF10 to the pound — have revived the self-catering love affair.

Of the 300-plus tour operators selling France, those which survived four poor years have a hugely increased choice of self-catering gites, cottages, villas and châteaux. And the market has changed. Poor quality gites have disappeared; properties where linen, towels, heating costs and even maid service are included in the price have flourished, and there is a stronger emphasis on quality.

The same is true of the camping market. A majority who prefer the security of a campsite now choose mobile homes ahead of tents, as they may offer fridge/freezers and three bedrooms among the facilities.

What hasn't changed is France. The beaches of Brittany and the Atlantic coast are still superb for families; the countryside and cuisine of Provence and Dordogne makes either of them ideal surroundings for a group of friends to unwind in.

The unknown quantity this year is the World Cup (June 10-July 12). First reports suggest that large houses near match venues, particularly in the south, are selling fast. Some camping operators are even installing large screens for the games.

Family holidays in France are likely to sell well this summer, as the strong pound means good value in self-catering accommodation

GITES

THERE are thousands of gites to choose from in France. Brittany Ferries last year took over the UK operations of Gites de France and has 1,200 properties for rent. Its best-selling regions last year were Brittany, Normandy, Poitou-Charentes and the Loire.

A typical Breton cottage — Le Vauhesry at Corseul — is on the owner's working farm, ten miles from a safe beach and three miles from the shops. Sleeping six, it costs £514 in May, £894 in August. The prices exclude ferries. Most holidays must be booked with a Brittany Ferries crossing, usually more convenient but substantially more expensive than from Dover.

Thomson has launched a brochure featuring 270 homes and including Le Shuttle crossings. The Atlantic coast and Riviera are strong regions: La Mirolie, a farm building sleeping four in Charente-Maritime, is £519 in May, £1,164 in August. Smaller specialists include Brittany Direct Holidays, which guarantees kettles and toasters, and television sets for the World Cup at £40 for two weeks. Villa Kerleven, on the bay of Concarneau, sleeps up to 12: £1,345 in May, £2,530 in August (ferry extra).

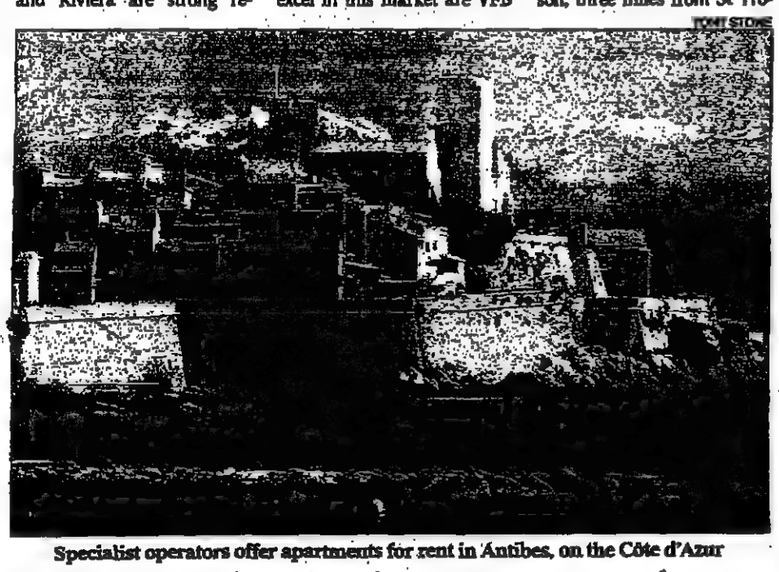
Chez Nous, an advertising brochure listing 3,000 properties, has the biggest choice. Just France says its 500 properties include converted windmills, watermills and cottages — La Grange, in a 2,000-acre estate with fishing and shared pool and tennis near Sauvignac, Charente, sleeps eight and costs £1,893 in May; £2,516 in August. French Life has added luxury villas to its cottage selection. Three long-established operators which excel in this market are VFB Holidays, Bowhills and Vacances en Campagne.

A 16th-century house sleeping eight in the Auvergne costs £844 in May, £1,452 in August with VFB; a 17th-century farmhouse with pool near Ruch, Dordogne, sleeping 16 costs £1,106 in May, £2,866 in August with Bowhills. Martin Sturge Holidays in France supplies a video of 80 of its properties on request.

Meon Villas, Something Special, Vintage Travel, Crystal France and Villas Côte d'Azur concentrate on villas with pools.

Something Special has Château Marouatte in the Dordogne, with 14 bedrooms and seven bathrooms in its own estate with pool — £6,483 in May; £7,920 in August. French Chapters also has châteaux in its villa and farmhouse collection. The most expensive is La Grande Maison, three miles from St Tropez. Sleeping up to 17, the villa has a pool, tennis court, helipad and four staff at £24,000 in May, £48,000 in August — excluding ferry crossing.

Other operators: Cresta, EuroVillages Maisons, Lagrange, Drive France.



TONY STONE

Specialist operators offer apartments for rent in Antibes, on the Côte d'Azur

APARTMENTS

DEMAND has been static in recent years as people tried Turkey or Greece instead but some operators are confident that 1998 will see a revival. Apartments and holiday villages are concentrated in Brittany, the Atlantic coast, the Riviera and Corsica. Cap Estérel is the largest complex of its type on the Riviera, with 1,400 apartments five miles from St Raphaël, with a golf course, tennis, five pools, archery and mountain biking on site. EuroVillages has a studio apartment, sleeping up to five, for £565 in May, £1,693 in August. French Life and Cresta also feature the complex and apartments throughout France.

Cap Estérel is owned by French company Pierre & Vacances, which this year includes linen at all its properties. The company has several smaller complexes, ranging from 30 to 150 apartments.

EuroVillages features Belle Dune in Picardy for the first time, while Cresta features Moliets-Plage on the west coast — £284 in May for a family of four, rising to £1,156 in August. French company Lagrange manages many of its own properties in 100 resorts and this year introduces the Alps and rural France. A holiday home at Vic-sur-Cere in the Auvergne has use of two pools — but take your own linen. Sleeping up to ten, it costs £602 in May, £1,256 in August.

Other operators: Brittany Direct, Brittany Ferries Holidays, Chez Nous, Driveline Europe, Interhome, Motours.

CAMPING

FORGET the tent in a field. Last year, more than half the 400,000 Britons who took a campsite holiday chose a mobile home — the latest model this season from Eurocamp has three bedrooms, microwave, fridge-freezer and fan. Keycamp has an Activity Plus programme including scuba diving, waterskiing and rafting; Canvas Holidays has pony trekking and riding lessons at a site in Burgundy.

The camping firms are upgrading partly to retain families whose teenagers demand more active holidays, and partly to attract couples and first-timers. Sunsites offers a tent in the grounds of a Brittany château, with its own golf course, for £89 per party in May (not available in peak season). Eurocamp has two new brochures, one for couples with sports or wine-tasting nearby. The second programme picks off-the-track sites without children's clubs and with free bike hire. Prices for two in St Emilion are £199 in May, £849 in August.

This wide disparity in seasonal price is typical of the market, offering huge bargains outside school holidays. Haven Europe, for example, charges £199 for 12 nights at Domaine de Kerlann in Brittany, one of three sites it owns, but £824 in August — based on two adults, children free. The camping firms argue, with some justification, that since the average villa holiday costs £1,300, camping or mobile homes on sites with pools, sports, restaurants, babysitting and children's clubs remain the best-value family holiday in France.

Other operators: Allez France, Becks Holidays, Brittany Direct, Carisma, Club Cantabrica, French Life, Lagrange, Matthews Holidays, Sandpiper, Select France.

CORSICA

THE island is directly accessible only from May to September when charter flights run to its four airports. Otherwise, it means scheduled flights via Paris or Nice, with expensive consequences. While Italians go to the east coast beaches, those around Calvi and Ile Rousse in the north are popular with Britons and French. Holiday Options has Le Home apartments, near Calvi, for £360 in May; £508 in August, based on three sharing a studio. There is a pool; cleaning is extra. Inland from Calvi, a combination of cottages and tennis, swimming and riding facilities is offered by VFB at Lama. Four adults sharing in May pay £464; in August, £598, including car hire.

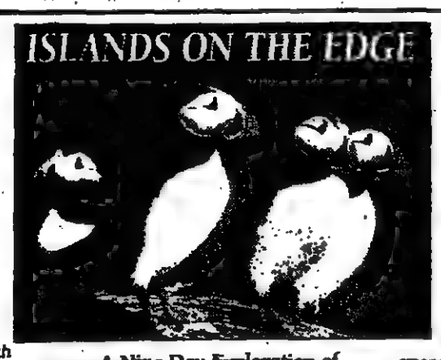
None of the resorts in Corsica is unpleasantly big and the west coast has beautiful coves for hideaway holidays. Simply Corsica offers cottages at Capicciolo on the Valinco Gulf and near the harbour of Propriano. Based on four sharing, the cost is £432 in May, £699 in August.

A railway links the resorts of Calvi, Bastia and Ajaccio, climbing through the mountains to the old capital of Corte. If you prefer a mountain base, Voyages Ilena has a two-bedroom converted 18th-century olive mill near Corte available in June for £791, £884 in August.

Other operators: Corsican Places, Cresta, Interhome, Vacances en Campagne.

● *Prices are per property for two weeks, including crossing with car from Dover unless stated. For Corsica, prices are per person, including flights.*

ISLANDS ON THE EDGE



A Nine Day Exploration of the Northern Isles & the Hebrides Aboard the 'Professor Multanovsky'
7th to 15th June 1998
*15th to 23rd June 1998**

Our expedition cruise aboard the ideally suited 'Professor Multanovsky' will take us from Aberdeen to Oban on an island odyssey to inaccessible places of great natural beauty, rich wildlife and mystical history. With just 40 or so like-minded souls we will sail to seldom visited islands on the fringes of the Orkney and Shetland groups - Copinsay, Fair Isle, Mousa, the Out Skerries and Foula and then head for the Hebrides and such gems as the World Heritage Site of St Kilda, North Rona and Canna.

This unique voyage will appeal to those who wish to visit some of the remotest islands of the kingdom and see some of its extraordinary, prolific seabird life. Explore the shores for grey and common seals and the cliffs for puffins and gannets, walk amongst the ruins of past habitation and enjoy the peace and spectacular scenery which has changed little in centuries.

THE PROFESSOR MULTANOVSKY

Built in Finland for the former Soviet Union's programme of polar and oceanographic research, she has been refurbished for expeditionary travel. The Multanovsky is a comfortable and well equipped vessel, accommodating a maximum of 48 passengers.

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Public areas include a lounge/bar with library, single sitting dining room, clinic, sauna, and an 'open' bridge where passengers are free to visit at most times. The hearty and excellent meals are supervised by European staff.

Looking after the day to day programme on board will be the expedition leader and the team. There will be no formal entertainment, but the expedition team will organise briefings and illustrated talks. For our forays ashore we will use the vessel's Zodiac craft allowing us great flexibility.

THE ITINERARY

We expect to explore and land on a number of remote islands, taking advantage of weather conditions to use our time to maximum effect. We hope to achieve the following:

Aberdeen. Embark 'Prof. Multanovsky' in the afternoon and sail. The expedition leader will introduce the team and outline the voyage plans

Copinsay. To the east of Orkney and Scapa Flow are the tiny islands of Copinsay, cruise the mile-long cliffs with their spectacular birdlife.

Fair Isle. Laying claim to be the most isolated inhabited isle in the UK. Here we can stretch our legs on an island walk, perhaps visiting the Bird Observatory and searching out the puffin slopes. The tiny population of 50 or so islanders always extend a warm welcome.

Mousa. South of Lerwick is the uninhabited island of Mousa. Hopefully, we should see basking common and grey seals and otters. Here we will also see one of the best examples of a Broch (fortified farm).

Foula. South west of Shetland lies Foula, home to thousands of auks, guillemots, puffins and kittiwakes, breeding on a breathtakingly high cliff, known as the Noup. In the island's ponds we will look for red-necked phalaropes and red-throated divers. The colonies of Arctic skuas and great skuas are amongst the largest in the North Atlantic.

North Rona. Our first landfall in the Hebrides will be the lovely, lonely island of North Rona. Here we may find leach's petrels nesting and nearby colonies of great black-backed gulls, great skuas and puffins. This is also a breeding ground for grey seals. In the evening we circumnavigate Sula Sgeir with its thousands of gannets.

St Kilda. Remote and spectacular, the St Kilda archipelago is home to vast numbers of seabirds. Weather permitting we will go ashore by Zodiac to Hirta, where the village which was deserted by the islanders in 1930 is now being restored by the National Trust for Scotland. Circumnavigate Boreray and the stacks.

Canna. Here, on this National Trust for Scotland property, we will enjoy coastal walks, looking for shorebirds, golden and white-tailed eagles and peregrine falcons.

Oban. Arrive in the morning and disembark after breakfast.

Prices range from £995 per person sharing a three bedded cabin (with shared facilities) to £1795 per person in a suite. Single cabins from £1695.

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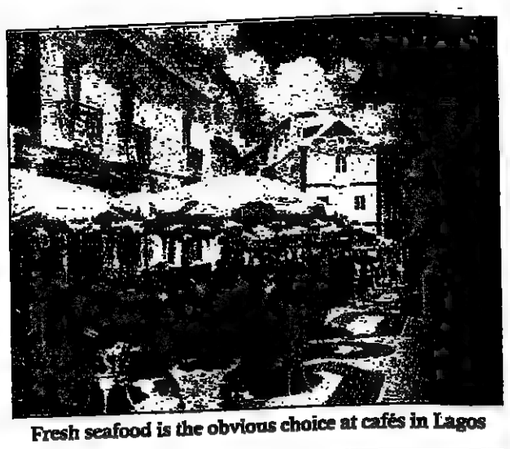
SUMMER SUN 1998: SELF-CATERING IN PORTUGAL

Coast is clear on the Algarve



Fresh seafood is the obvious choice at cafés in Lagos

WORLD PICTURES

Beyond the Algarve's typical tourist destinations are resorts such as Lagos, an unspoilt haven with its rocky coves and glorious beaches

Marianne Curphey grabs her surfboard to tackle first the big waves, and then a big plate of paella

Lonely, white sandy beaches with huge Atlantic breakers crashing onto the shores of hidden coves; miles and miles of hot, empty roads with the scent of eucalyptus in the wind. Tiny fishing villages with family run cafés serving fresh seafood and carafes of rich red wine.

Surely this can't be the Algarve, home to geriatrics and golf courses?

It is, and it needs some good press. Well before Victor Meldrew put *One Foot in the Algarve* and moaned and groaned his way through a holiday there, the south coast of Portugal had been struck off the list of fashionable destinations.

The luggage carousel at Faro airport confirms suspicions that the average visitors are a genteel couple or a well-heeled family, as scores of folded pushchairs snake around the conveyor belt, followed by an equal number of expensive golf clubs.

But there is an alternative to the busy beaches, high-rise resorts and golf courses. Hire a car, head west, and don't stop until you reach Lagos, on the Atlantic coast, an old fishing village that is now a lively town, complete with marina, restaurants and nightlife.

Though it has expanded to serve the needs of tourists, the old town has still managed to preserve some of its character. Steep, narrow streets wind from the beaches up the hillside, and stone balconies give magnificent views across the curve of the Algarve coast.

My boyfriend and I are both keen surfers who regard a holiday without waves as a missed opportunity. And we chose Lagos, the last major town before wilderness begins, as our base because of its proximity to the coast.

Heading straight out of Lagos to the country's western tip takes you to the town of Sagres and the picturesque coves of Beliche, Tonel and Mareta.

Tonel beach is itself magnificent: a dramatic rock in the centre of the bay, and surrounded by imposing cliffs. When the sea is calm, the waves lap gently at their base. But when a big swell is running in from a distant Atlantic storm, the breakers pound the white sand.

The waves here are popular with surfers and boogie boards, although the sea breaks on to boulders at some stages of the tide, and the beach is not suitable for beginners.

Tonel and the others are about an hour's drive from Lagos, a trip that seems fine in the early morning as you head towards the coast along the bumpy, uneven roads. However, after a day in the waves, it seems like a long way back with the weight of salt crystals on your lashes and in your ears, arms aching from exertion and sunburn on the back of your neck.

The surrounding countryside is dry and dusty, but punctuated with low trees and bushes. There are few houses on the roadside and only the occasional shop or garage.

From May onwards, the air becomes hot and thick with the scent of eucalyptus and the perfume pervaded our hire car as we drove along with every window open for improvised air-conditioning.

The days were governed by the tides. Some mornings we would be on the road early, blinking blearily into a rising sun. Later in the holiday we enjoyed leisurely lunches, sitting out the heat of the day under a café sunshade, before venturing into the water in the late afternoon.

A short drive up the coast from Sagres along a road pocked by potholes and subsidence is the beach and small fishing harbour of Arifana. With a few simple cafés and no shade from the midday sun, Arifana beach is virtually untouched by British tourism.

On calm days the cove is perfect for swimming, but when a swell is running it is the turn of the surfers. Some waves wrap themselves around the headland, while others further down the beach crest and fall more gently.

The cafés at the top of the headland serve great fresh fish. I remember the comfort of eating an enormous paella, complete with lobster, crab and all varieties of prawns and white fish after a particularly disastrous day of surfing.

I had messed up every wave I paddled for, and, as I stumbled bedraggled from the beach, I attracted the curious stares of a group of dark-eyed Portuguese women... glossy hair and lips, perfect nails and jewellery glinting in the sunlight.

"That's it," I told my boyfriend, throwing my surfboard on the sand in disgust. "I'm taking up sunbathing." Accustomed to these tantrums, he suggested something to eat, hence the paella, the most expensive dish on the menu and the best I have ever tasted.

If you are visiting the Algarve in summer, it is best to stay indoors at noon; in June and July, the midday sun is unbearably hot. The light is blade-sharp for eyes without sunglasses. Even with shades, its reflection on white tiled pavements makes you squint.

We chose to go self-catering, although in my experience it can be pot luck: some apartments lack even the most basic cooking utensils such as kettle, tin or bottle opener. However, our apartment in Lagos, tucked behind the main street and five minutes' drive from the supermarket, was clean and well-equipped, although the kitchen was cramped and the cooker too small and too slow.

Self-catering is the best type of accommodation for people who dislike being tied to the mealtimes and routines of a hotel. Lazy mornings, late nights, siestas, or trips to the beach at the crack of dawn are easier if you know you are not going to be disturbed when you return.

You have the option of eating out or having a quiet evening in to recover from the excesses of previous nights. And being a surfer, I find the owners of self-catering flats are much more tolerant of sand and surf-wax than hotels.

Those who write off the Algarve as bland miss out on the laid-back local culture, the wild and open countryside and the fantastic food. I'm already looking forward to returning to Portugal for another huge paella. And I'm still surfing.

FACT FILE

- Marianne Curphey travelled with the Travel Club of Upminster (01708 225000). Seven nights in the Ventura Apartments in Lagos cost around £310 per person in May (£378 for two weeks), based on two people sharing. The price rises to £478 for two weeks in August, and includes flights, transfers and accommodation.
- Car hire from Avis starts at £84 a week in May, £104 in August, including all taxes.
- Further information: The Portuguese Tourist Office (0171-494 1441).

ALL THE OPERATORS

■ Allez France 01903 748100; Barwell Leisure 0181-397 4411; Becks Holidays 01273 842843; Bowhills 01489 877627; Brittany Direct Holidays 0181-641 6060; Brittany Ferries 0990 360360; Canvas Holidays 01383 644000; Carisma 01923 284235.

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■ Holiday Villas 0113-266 6860. Individual Travellers 01798 869416; Interhome 0181-891 1294; Just France 0181-780 4488; Lagrange 0171-371 6111; Lanzarote Leisure 0181-449 7441; Keycamp 0181-395 4000; Magic of Portugal 0181-741 1181; Manos Holidays 0171-216 8000; Martin Sturge Holidays in France 01225 310623.

■ Matthews Holidays 01483 284044; Meon Villas 01730 268411; Motours 01892 518555; Mundi Color 0171-828 6021; Panorama Holidays 01273 206531; Prestige Holidays 01425 480400; Sandpiper 01932 868658; Select France 01865 331350; Simply Corsica 0181-747 3580; Simply Portugal 0181-987 6161; Simply Spain 0181-987 6112; Something Special 01992 557711/55.

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PORTUGUESE HOLIDAY HOMES

WITH ITS mix of white Moorish-style villas and newer complexes with communal pools, mini-markets (overpriced compared with local shops) and restaurants (ditto), Portugal's Algarve practically invented the self-catering holiday. But you need to choose your property and its location with care.

A building boom has concreted over the coast around Albufeira, Praia da Oura, Vilamoura and Quarteira, turning much of it into a sprawl of quintas and haciendas with an accompanying outbreak of Paddy's Bars, Harry's Bars, Chunky Chicken Worlds and Water Worlds.

For holidaymakers seeking to flee such togetherness, the long-established Meon Villas offers private villas with pools, mainly with car hire included in the price, at the less cluttered western end of the Algarve, some of the best of them up to ten miles or so from the sea.

The well-equipped four-star Prado Alegre is in a quiet position seven miles from the sea and with the Penina and Palmares golf courses nearby, as well as the fishing port of Portimão, for quayside sardine feasts. Four people would pay £464 each for a May fortnight, £919 in August, and the prices include car hire.

Much nearer the coast at Carvoeiro, a small resort with a pretty beach that gets crowded in high season, is Velha Videira, a five-star villa in an acre of land. With peace guaranteed even in high season, it costs £562 in May, £1,155 in August (also for each of four and including car hire).

AT THE other end of the Algarve, the delightful little town of Tavira seems to have remained untouched by earthquakes or over-development; the white domes and spires of its 37 churches still dominating the skyline.

Elegant 16th and 17th-century mansions line its cobbled streets, and a fine Roman bridge spans the Gilão river. Self-caterers can plunder the fish market of nearby Olhão, eat in its splendid seafood restaurants, and take boat hops to the huge sandy spits on the Ilhas (little islands) opposite.

Individual Travellers offers village studios near the centre for £519 for each of two in May, £675 in August, including car hire, insurance and scheduled flights.

The firm specialises in independent self-catering holidays but will tailor-make inclusive packages in out-of-the-ordinary locations such as windmills, lighthouses, village houses, fishermen's cottages and villas, many in lesser-known regions such as Planicies or the Costa Verde, as well as the Algarve.

Other operators: Destination Portugal, Extra Holidays, Magic of Portugal, Simply Portugal, Sovereign Villas, Travel Club of Upminster, The Villa Agency, Vintage Travel.

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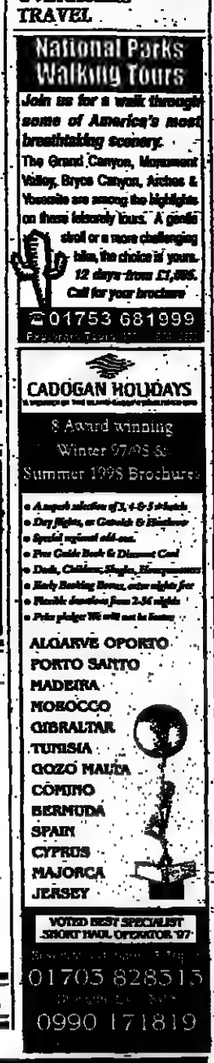

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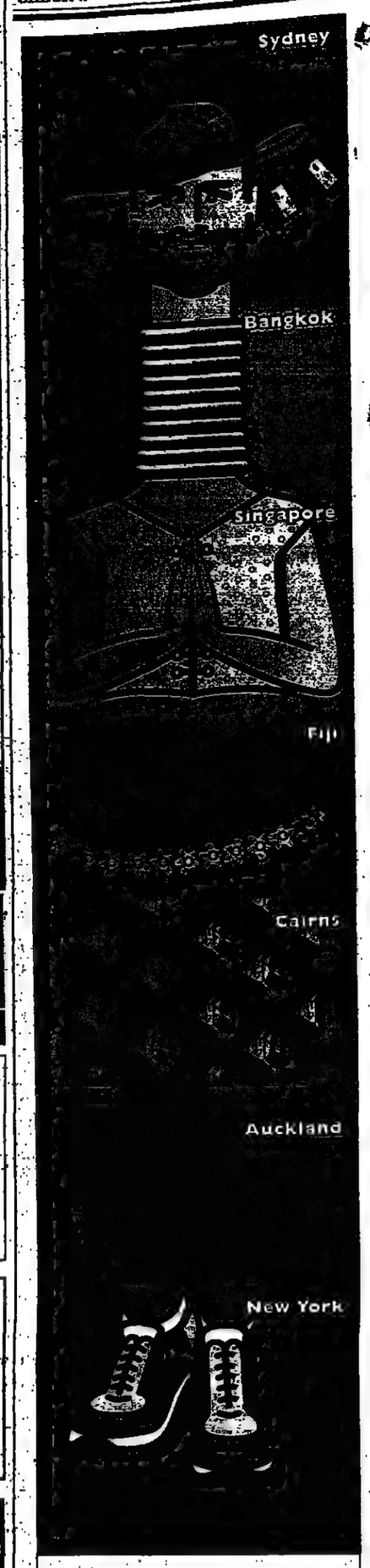

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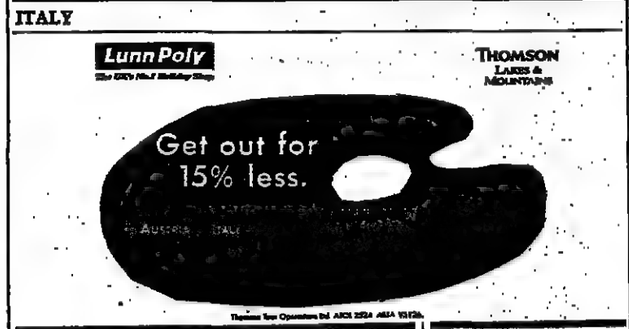

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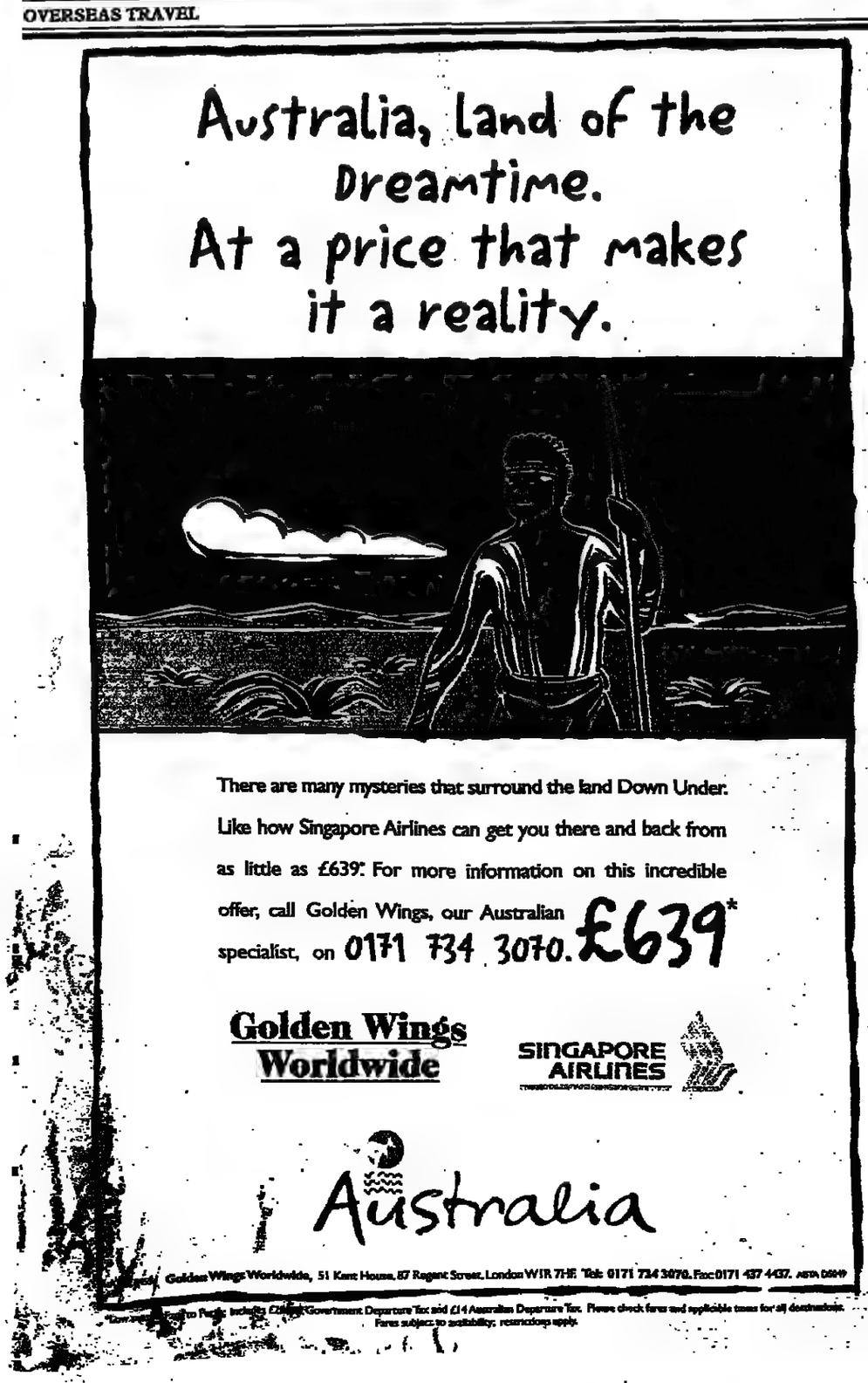

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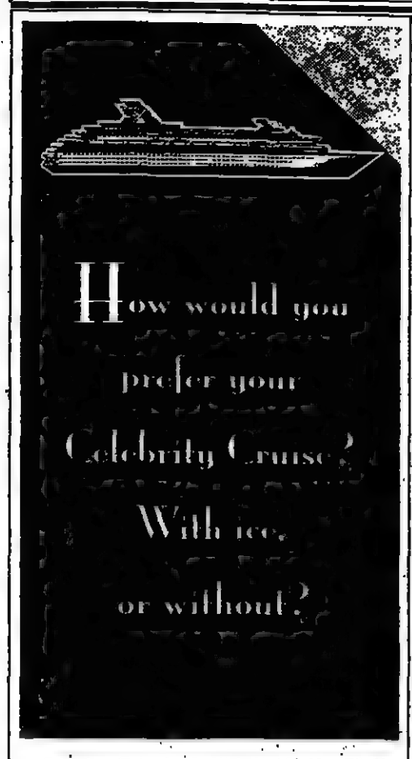

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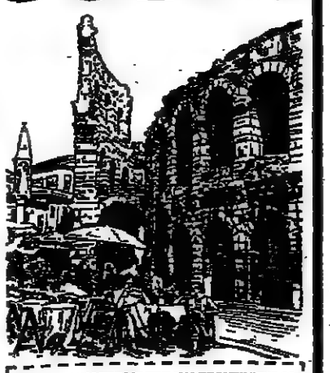

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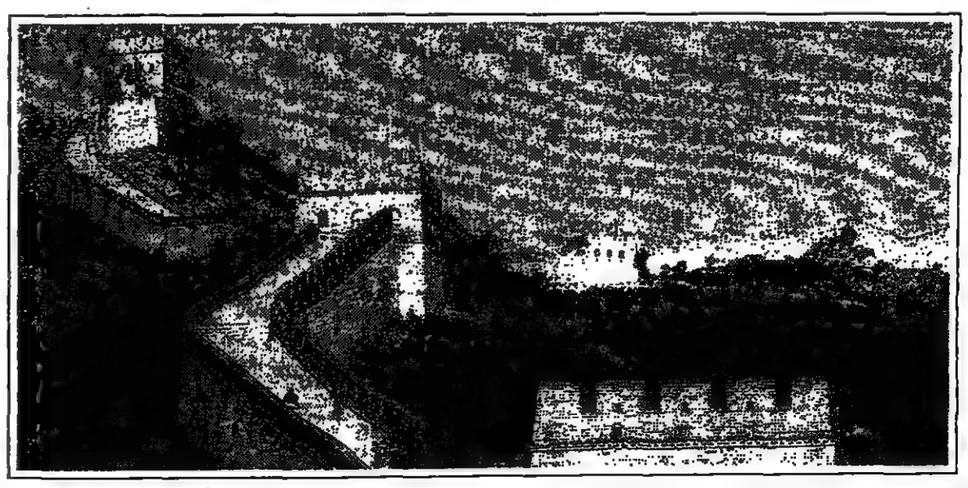

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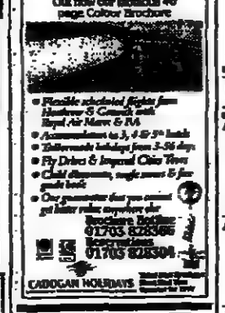

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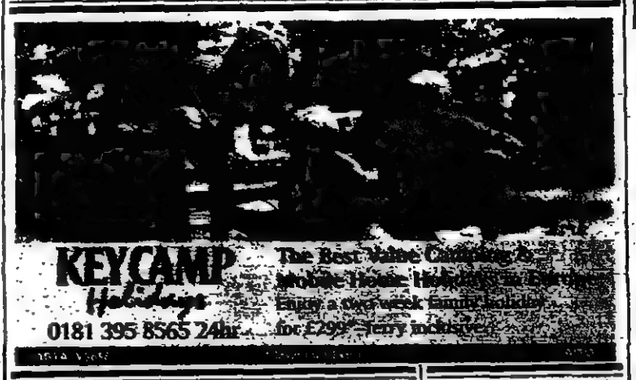

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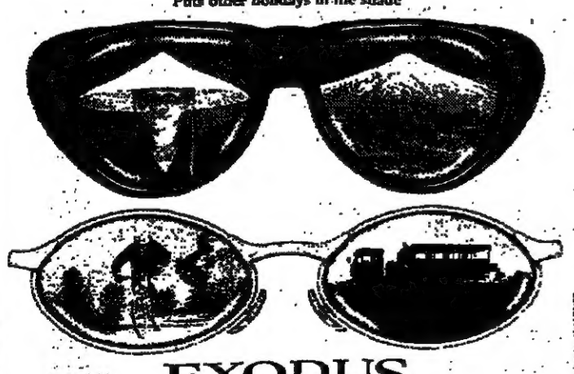

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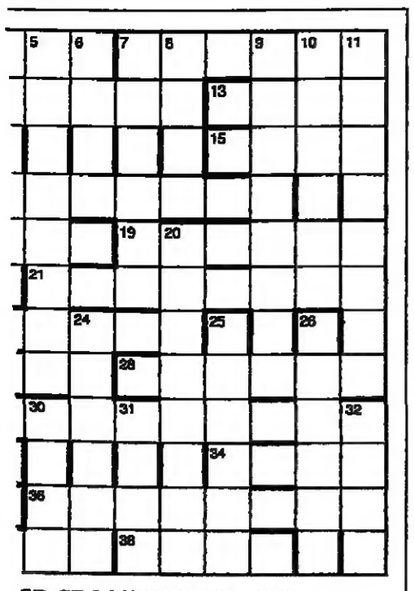

THE playfair code uses a five by five square in which the 26 letters of the alphabet are arranged (I and J share the same square). The first squares are taken up by a codeword in which no letter is repeated, and the rest of the alphabet follows in the normal order. To encode a word, you divide it into pairs of letters and consider each pair separately. If the two letters of a pair appear in the same column, the letters below them are used. If the two letters appear in the same row, the letters to the right of them are used. Both column and row are considered as loops, so the letter below the bottom of a column is taken to be the top letter in the column, and the letter to the right of the end of a row is considered to be the first letter in that row. Where the letters appear in different columns and rows, the squares in which they appear are taken to be the opposite corners of a rectangle, and the coded version consists of the letters in the other two corners; if the upper letter is first in the word to be encoded, the upper corner is taken first in the coded version, and if not the lower corner is used first.

U	N	F	A	I
R	E	S	T	B
C	D	G	H	K
L	M	O	P	Q
V	W	X	Y	Z

OU TR AG ED

LF BE FH DM

In this crossword the answers to four clues have to be encoded before being entered. The necessary codeword has to be deduced. Each of twelve of the other clues contains a group of letters which appears too be a word (or in one case two words) but is actually code, using the same Playfair codeword. These words have to be decoded before the clues can be properly solved.

ACROSS
3 Duma back to hold armadillo (4)
7 Recklessly go in for exercise round open space (6)
12 'Bodily' gives right note in very severe environment (8)
13 Last bits of fresh pina, stale meal and last bit of bread (4)
14 Encounter wader when sun is gone (4)
15 Auld arrangement for having no feudal superior in Orkney (4)
16 Add a chemical — foul mixture removed and consumed (10)
17 Attracts models the French rejected (6)
19 Confused top ten introduction to 'Lumbered' (6)
21 Last of vats, heady and telling (8)
22 Idols half African group got together by railway (8)
27 Where coaches stop without — frolic (6)
28 Unexpected cracks gone, first and last: curtailed bliss reformed (6)
29 Perverse deal with sadism and footwear (10)
33 Sportsman loses head where colours are eliminated (4)
34 Close main line (4)
35 Go for tailless antelope (4)
36 Mark indicates flower is head of knapweed (8)
37 Suits about rupees left for old maids (6)
38 Merganser take piece of mine then moult (4)

DOWN
1 Inclined to make jokes which would be cleaner with second half first (4)
2 Humour, Napier's first failing, came before serine (6)
4 Precludes waif getting back tablets to begin with (6)
5 Scottish jasp for elder queen, perhaps, taking in roundabout tour with king (8)
6 Perk obtained, heart only opposed (4)
7 Barbados pride, for instance, is with nearly everything (6)
8 Essence of arrest for pot (4)
9 Italian dish served to the Spanish in Italy (8)
10 Arrange antennae without an upset (6)
11 Says everything's outside in (8)
17 Woolly beetle possibly has to excavate one (8)
18 Two rivers covered by inverted marine plant (8)
20 Fancy has forsaken hamadryades dancing (8)
23 Any tropical tree, palm included, involved in perception of sound (6)
24 Heartless fellow comes back about a thousand paces (6)
25 Apparently plan means Sean gathered in effect (6)
26 Vestment held upside down by godless setter alight (6)
30 Bending knees while remaining upright using pressure to flatten oneself (4)
31 Superior position for intending tandem-rider last away (4)
32 Remove first and last items from bill, if proposal is rejected (4)

ER CROSSWORD No 3446
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Solution and notes for No 3443: The Top Line by Obiter

A	U	R	O	R	A	B	O	R	E	A	L	I	S	
M	R	E	C	O	U	R	S	E	C	R	A	N	E	
E	N	C	L	O	S	E	D	V	O	G	P	U	P	
R	S	E	I	N	T	A	K	E	N	E	P	I	T	
I	M	I	T	S	R	S	I	L	U	B	H	T	E	
C	A	V	I	T	A	T	E	S	T	R	E	W	N	
A	C	E	T	A	L	S	R	A	R	E	B	I	T	
N	O	R	L	A	N	T	E	N	D	E	R	E	R	
D	S	S	E	R	O	I	X	L	I	M	I	D	I	
R	U	N	I	C	C	R	E	A	M	S	D	W	O	
E	O	A	S	T	H	O	R	C	A	D	I	A	N	
A	M	I	C	I	E	X	T	E	R	N	A	L	A	
M	I	R	A	C	L	E	S	S	I	M	N	E	L	

The title in the top line is AURORA BOREALIS, ie, Northern Lights, defining the unclued lights except for 5 (AUSTRAL). The thematic indicator is N.

Across: 15; nog rev. of up. 19; I'm nit. 23; 'vita' in 'cat' en. 27; rare bint. 41; anag of 'nt as o'. 43; rev of 'man' ICL **Down** 7; 'NV' in 'reels'. 8; E CO ut.20; tin anag of 'let'. 21; brenem (ref Bremen). 26; 'ti' in 'SRN'. 28; 'a' anag of 'alecs'. 31; oche l. 33; rev of 'rex' in 'nets'. 36; i' Man RL 40; wanle

The winner is Dr D.J. Sloan, of Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim. The runners-up are H. Martin, of Caernarfon, Wales; Mrs Renée Anne Naef, of Lightwater, Surrey; Chris Moulton, of Wirral, Merseyside; M. Galloway, of Marlow, Buckinghamshire; B. Dunlop, of Kings Lynn, Norfolk.

BRIDGE

by Robert Sheehan

THE HAND below was the subject of Question 2 of the Christmas quiz. East-West should have got a big penalty. Which was (a) the worst bid, (b) the most imaginative bid and (c) the wettest bid? (Luckily all competitors interpreted my sloppy "bid" to include pass.)

Love all — Dlr West — Rubber Bridge

North: ♠AJ10 ♥KQ10 ♦A10 ♣KQJ84

West: ♠KQ942 ♥5 ♦6 ♣A107632

East: ♠76 ♥AJ942 ♦KQJ83 ♣9

South: ♠853 ♥8763 ♦97542 ♣5

S	W	N	E
-	1C[1]	Dble[2]	Redble[3]
1D[4]	1S[5]	2NT[6]	Dble[7]
3C[8]	Pass[9]	Pass	Pass[10]

Contract: Three Clubs (sic) by South
Lead: three of clubs

The contract went three down. It was an instructive sequence.

1 Two-suiters in which the suits are conveniently placed to show them both make sound openers even with as few as nine high-card points, provided the high cards are concentrated in the long suits.

2 Intending to rebid 2NT to show 20-22 points.

3 A redouble in this situation shows interest in playing for penalties. With short spades, One Heart is a reasonable alternative. But redouble should have worked well.

4 This is best. After the redouble all South is concerned with is finding a fit at a low level.

5 In this sequence, the opener should pass over One Diamond unless he has a weak highly distributional hand. So One Spade means West has nine or more cards in the black suits, and is not defensively orientated.

6 This is the worst bid in the auction. He has received the warning that South has very little, so the choice is between 1NT and Pass.

7 Sound, even though he knows the lack of communication between the East-West hands will make the defence difficult.

8 Imaginative — it can't really be an attempt to play in clubs as West has shown at least five of the suit. So it implies he has length in both majors. However, after his partner's 2NT rebid it might have been better to pass — there was no guarantee of a fit in the majors.

9 I passed because I was afraid North-South would find a heart fit, and I thought North was capable of passing Three Clubs in error.

10 East should double Three Clubs — he knows West has at least five, and crucially he has the hearts well held. Even wetter than West.

Worst bid: North's 2NT (10 points). **Most imaginative:** South's Three Clubs (10 points). West's Redouble (5 points). **Wettest call:** East's final pass (10 points), West's final pass (5 points).

● *The Macallan International Pairs results are in Sport.*

WORD ANSWERS

Answers from page 40

SAUGRENU
(c) Absurd, preposterous, ridiculous. The French word. "The saugrenu, comic Shakespeare scenes."

PAPELITO
(b) A cigarette. In Spanish, literally "a slip of paper, a bit of paper". Ouida, *Under Two Flags*, 1867: "Something to drink and something to smoke, were it only a glass of brown sherry and a little papelito."

RAAD
(a) A council, an assembly. Specifically (usually with capital initial) the legislative assembly of one of the former Boer republics. The Dutch word for a council. "The Minister of Labour says that in no circumstances will he sit in the same raad as a non-white."

ROSH HASHANA
(a) The Jewish New Year, celebrated on the first and second day of the month Tishri. In Hebrew "the head of the year". "Rosh Hashana is Coronation Day for G-d as our King and for Israel as His people."

TWO BRAINS

Answers from page 40

Question 1:
Macbeth called the witches juggling fiends.
Question 2:
No. The act of catching a falling object exerts sufficient force to destroy the bridge.

CHESS

by Raymond Keene

THE past year has been some kind of *annus mirabilis* for grandmaster Matthew Sadler. A share of first prize in the British Championship, outstanding performances in both the European and World Team Championships for the British Chess Federation squad, a good showing in the Mind Sports Olympiad and now victory in the Hastings Premier. The only blot on the landscape was his relatively early ejection from the Fide knockout championship in Groningen. Here is one of Sadler's most decisive games from the Hastings tournament which he dominated.

White: Matthew Sadler; Black: James Plaskett
Hastings Premier, January 1998
Pirc Defence

1 d4 d6 2 e4 Nf6 3 Nc3 g6 4 f4 Bg7 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be3

The opening has been a variation of the Pirc Defence. If now 6 ... Nc6 7 Be2 a6 8 e5 Ng4 9 Bg1 b5 leads to highly unclear play. However, after 6 ... Nc6 the simple 7 Qd2 Bg4 8 0-0-0 gives White an edge.

6 ... b6 7 Qd2 c5 8 d5 Nbd7 9 h3

White prepares a storm on the king's flank and also rules out the annoying prospect of ... Ng4.

9 ... Rb8 10 Bh5

White's king's bishop looks an effective attacking unit. Nevertheless, Sadler is prepared to give it up for Black's knight on d7.

10 ... a6 11 Bxd7 Qxd7

Here I would have preferred to recapture with the knight.

12 e5

Black is forced back on all fronts.

12 ... Ne8 13 0-0 Bb7 14 Rad1

Black's opening strategy has backfired.

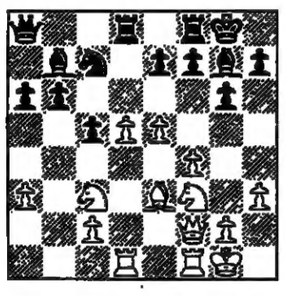
14 ... Nc7 15 e3 Rbd8 16 b4 Qc8

This seems over-ambitious. Black could still have obtained an endgame after 16 ... dxe5 17 Nxe5 Bxe5 18 fxe5 Nxd5 19 Nxd5 Qxd5 20 Qxd5 Rxd5 21 Rxd5 Bxd5 22 bxc5.

17 Qf2 Qa8

Black's pieces have gravitated far from the defence of his king.

18 bxc5 dxc5



White now switches his rook to press Black's queenside pawns.

19 Rb1 Nxd5 20 Nxd5 Bxd5 21 Rxb6 c4 22 Bc5 Rd7

Black's king's bishop is beginning to look more feeble.

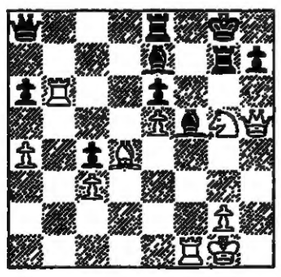
23 c3 Rb8 24 Rfb1 Rbd8 25 Bd4 e6 26 h4 Bf8 27 a4 Bc6 28 h5

At long last the storm breaks.

28 ... gxh5

This looks suicidal, but White was gearing up for a massive attack with moves such as Ng5 and Qh4.

29 f5 Be4 30 fxe6 fxe6 31 Rf1 Bf5 32 Ng5 Re8 33 Qh4 Rg7 34 Qxh5 Be7



White's tactic wrecks the co-ordination of the black forces.

35 Rxe6 Qc8 36 Rxf5

Another hammerblow.

36 ... exf5 37 Nxh7

A further sacrifice. 37 ... Rxh7 would be refuted by 38 Rg6+ Rg7 39 Rxg7+ Kxg7 40 e6+ Bf6 41 Qg5+.

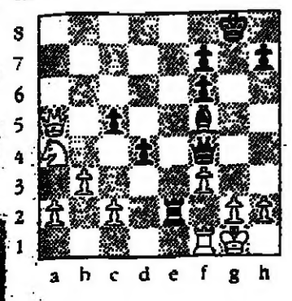
37 ... Qxa6 38 Nf6+ Bxf6 39 Qxe8+ Kh7 40 exf6 Black resigns

Sadler's finale was spectacular.

WINNING MOVE

by Raymond Keene

BLACK to play. This position is from the game Maximenko — Shatskov, Russia 1997.



This position illustrates the dangers of decentralising the pieces. White's queen and knight are playing little part in the struggle and Black exploited their absence to conclude the game quickly. Can you see how?

The first correct answer drawn on Thursday will win a year's subscription to the Staunton Society. Answers on postcards to Winning Move, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN.

The answer will be published next Saturday.

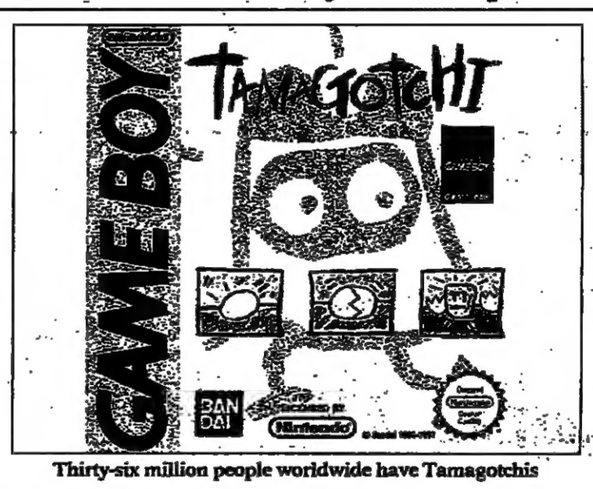
Solution to last week's competition: 1 Qf7+
The winner is: N.S. Brown, of Barnoldswick, Lancashire.

COMPUTER GAMES AND PASTIMES

by Tim Wapshott

ARE YOU bored with Tamagotchis or do you reckon there is life in the old digital dog yet? Last year, 36 million people were caught up in the cyberpet craze, going to extraordinary lengths to secure a glorified keyfob to feed, clean up after and train. For producers Bandai the fad spelled a bonanza and its factories worked around the clock to keep up with demand.

The portable pals were as popular with adults as children and all faced the same problem: how to tend their critters around the clock. In Japan, sober-suited if sad businessmen checked their Tamis into special crèches so they could attend business meetings. Otherwise, where you went, it went. The specially protective saw their pets live to a ripe old age. Those with challenged attention-spans, however, saw their bleeping mites wither and die.



Thirty-six million people worldwide have Tamagotchis

So where do you take the Tamagotchi fad once a large chunk of the world has already bought it, for £5 or £10 a time? Bandai thinks it has the answer with two products, costing much more than the original gizmo. Just released is one Tamagotchi version for the Nintendo Game Boy and another for the PC but neither is as satisfying as the first. The **Game Boy Tamagotchi** allows you to raise three pets simultaneously. The PC version is bright and breezy but not much bigger since the pets are trapped in a small screen. After a short intro, you are ready to hatch your first egg which must be fed, entertained, disciplined and cleared up after if it is to grow.

What started out as a quick-buck idea has grown into a hefty-priced sequel with the PC version selling for £19.99 and the Game Boy format at £29.99. The original was the best as the skill in raising a cyberpet was finding time to keep it happy with a press of buttons — leaving it to fend for itself when you were out wasn't enough. The Game Boy slant is self-defeating since it has a permanent pause feature: when you turn off the pocket console, the pet is frozen in cyberspace and time until your return. The PC version is less generous, you can leave it unattended at the care centre *for up to three days* but as a PC title there's not enough to it.

Whenever I hear the word Tamagotchi I think of modest Aki Maita. She's the young Japanese housewife who, three years ago, dreamt up the whole concept of pocket pets. An employee in Bandai's Toy Enterprise Division, she came up with the idea after spotting a boom in the number of real pets getting good homes. She took the idea to her boss and the rest became marketing history, except that Aki has not made a penny out of the bestseller she came up with and still takes home the same pay packet. Nor has she been promoted. She has apparently said that she hopes Bandai will eventually promote her, which begs the question what the hell's a girl got to do over there to get noticed?

NOW IS the time when all serious gameplayers are beginning to come undone with their Christmas software. It always happens. One minute you are sailing along losing entire evenings to gaming and the next you reach a dead end. If you are lucky, someone at work is a stage ahead of you and can help.

If you have no one to call on, a couple of slick game cheats could end your pathetic pondering. Datel, the company which specialises in console accessories like memory cards, is exploiting the cheat market with codes at its website (http://www.datel.co.uk).

Here are a few choice examples. In **Tomb Raider II**, give yourself infinite oxygen with 8008C66E 0710 or infinite shotgun ammo with 8008C724 FFFF. In **Final Fantasy VII** you can stop bomb countdowns with 8009D12E 000F. In **Golden Eye**, grab infinite ammo at the dam with 800BAB97 FFFF. At the facility you can get infinite health with 8109D7DC 3F80 or for the same at the bunker/silo, type 8109AFDC 3F80.

NEW SOFTWARE

SINGER Sam Fox once said that she had six pairs of trainers, "one for every day of the week". Well, should you fancy a different hairstyle for every day of the week clap eyes on **Wig Out!**, an excellent fantasy hairstyling tool.

Load up a digital picture of yourself, trace the outline of the face and start clicking your way through 50 hairstyles. Crew-cuts, highlights or flyaway locks all crop up and the beauty of the title is that you no longer have to wait weeks for disasters to grow out before trying again.

You can tint hair any colour from peroxide blond to black as well as add a host of accessories to complete the new you. Facial hair, spectacles, jewellery and hats complete the picture and can be scaled for a perfect fit. Results can be printed or exported by e-mail.

Wig Out from Connectix is available separately or as part of a compilation called **Family Antics**. This costs £6 more and includes three other programmes — a desktop designer, multimedia greeting card package and picture album maker. Either way, Wig Out! remains a star buy. If you have trouble finding it, call Connectix on 0181-561 1414.

■ **Verdict: 7 out of 10. Change your image — it's a hoot. £29 on its own or £34.95 in Family Antics compilation.**

Wig Out! can work wonders

EVEN WITH money-made-easy programmes, when I start doing my accounts my head hurts. Not a natural with figures, even a ticking watch can throw my concentration so I have an automatic phobia about zany packages with jangling bell and whistle sound effects. Fortunately, in **Money 98** (standard) these can be turned down but still the title is not music to the ears.

The title is a facelift of Microsoft's original Money for Windows 95 programme but beyond the new opening menu arrangement, little has changed for the better in the programme's engine department. You can track various accounts at once and it is easy to enter transaction details. These get sorted automatically, by date. They can also be arranged in groups to fuel good-looking analysis, like flow charts and pie charts.

But in too many departments Money 98 leaves you short-changed. Keeping an eye on looming quarterly VAT bills is not so easy, nor is the tracking of weekly or monthly repeat transactions, like mortgage payments. Money 98 muddles money-matters further by attempting to develop into an interactive money source, filling up disk space with educational but often unnecessary training and explanation features. The space would be better spent providing a more comprehensive help facility or an online manual.

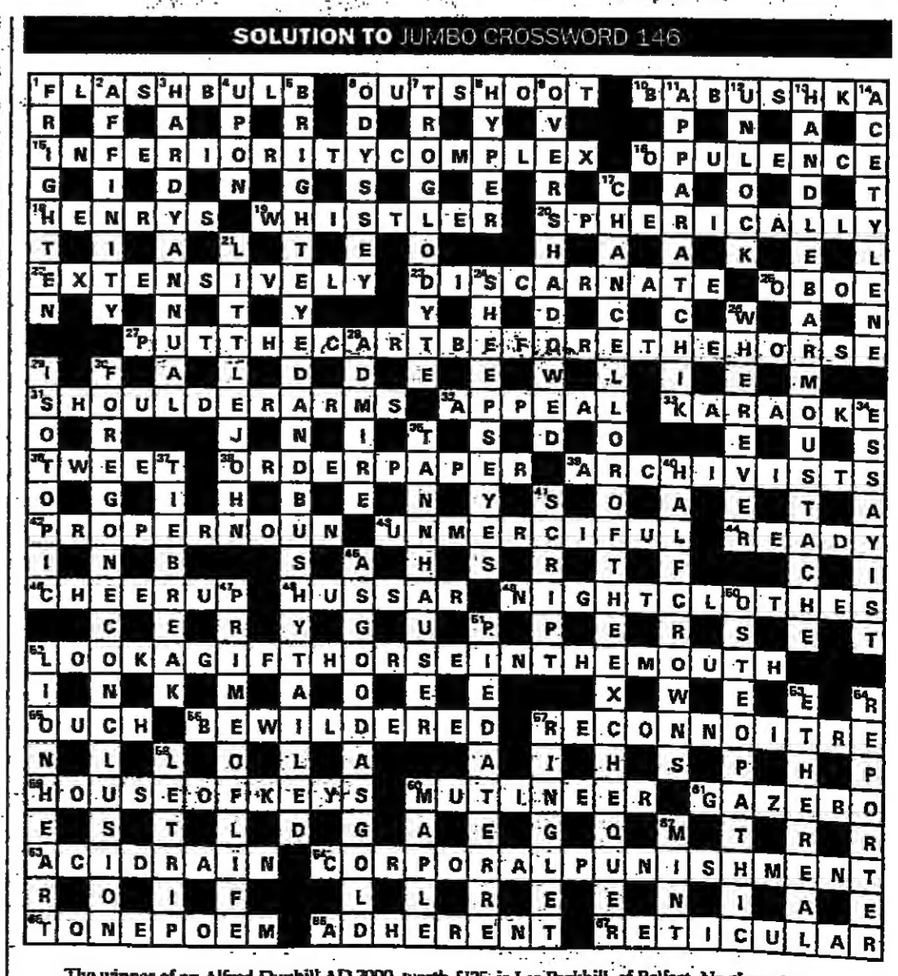
■ **Verdict: 6 out of 10. Money 98 = money matters made murky. £29.99.**

CROSS WORDS

Answers from page 40

Awkward, baklava, take aim; inaptitude, ineptitude, propaganda; daylight robbery, exclamation mark, public transport

SOLUTION TO JUMBO CROSSWORD 146



The winner of an Alfred Dunhill AD 2000, worth £125, is Les Parkhill, of Belfast, Northern Ireland

هكذا من الإصل

MODERN MANNERS

by John Morgan

Send your queries to Morgan's Modern Manners, The Times, Weekend, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN

Q I keep being pestered by people who are not really friends, but who insist on inviting me for lunch or dinner. Either they are acquaintances whom I don't wish to know better, or they are old friends from whom I have grown apart. How can I politely resist collecting these lame ducks? — E.M., Shropshire.

A Adopt a long-term, drip-by-drip strategy to gently let your lame ducks go. This is a kinder and more effective approach than drastic action, which could upset them and leave you feeling guilty. Over a period of time, aim to be largely unavailable when unwanted invitations are offered, be sure never to reciprocate hospitality and generally adopt a demeanour that is polite, but which lacks the warmth of true friendship. Eventually, the lamest of ducks will get the message.

Q I noticed your answer (December 20) to a correspondent who wanted to know how he could find out whether his wedding present had arrived safely when no letter of thanks had been received. But what do you do when the reverse is the case? While it is, of course, bad manners to expect to receive a wedding present, it is somewhat unusual, if not unheard of, for wedding guests not to give one at all. When my eldest son married, he did not receive a wedding present from a very old friend of ours. Although this was rather curious, of course nothing was said. When his younger brother married two years later, he did receive a present. We have often wondered whether, in fact, a wedding present was sent but was mislaid as it is, of course, a possibility. It may well be that our friend believes my eldest son has no manners. Any suggestions? — Name and address supplied.

A As the person concerned is a very old friend, and as convention clearly dictates that anyone who attends a wedding should give the bride and groom a present, I would recommend an honest and relaxed approach. When you see them next, introduce the topic of wedding presents into the conversation. Then say how delighted your younger son was with his, but that you've always been really worried that something may have happened to his elder brother's present as nothing was received.

Q A week or two ago, you commented on forms of address, including the habit of addressing a married woman by her husband's name (including the convention that she uses her own name only when divorced or widowed). Are you not out of date? Wives have long since ceased to be mere appendages of their husbands, a fact reflected in the almost universal convention that they are addressed by their own given names plus their husband's surname. Indeed, there is now a trend to continue to use their own surname after marriage. I am responsible for the management of a large database for a political party. Can you imagine the outcry if we decided to address all married female members by their husband's given names? — Steuart Campbell, Edinburgh.

A Modern manners provide a clear distinction between social and professional usage. Socially, it is still correct for women (unless they wish otherwise) to be styled using their husband's first names. However, in the professional arena, most women, for obvious and totally appropriate reasons, choose to use their own forenames. Quite which model is adopted by a political party for its database depends, I suspect, on the particular hegemonic hue of the association.

Q A month ago I was invited to a large formal dinner party, to which I would have loved to have gone. Unfortunately, owing to a previous and much more dreary engagement, I was unable to accept. Now the prior invitation has fallen through and I, for various reasons, would kill to attend the other party. What do you advise? — Name and address supplied.

A If you are well-acquainted with the hostess, write (phoning will appear pushy, as well as putting her on the spot) a letter saying: "Thank you again for your kind dinner invitation. Although, sadly, I had to decline before, now my previous engagement has fallen through, I would absolutely love to see you and should be delighted to come if you have any last-minute drop-outs." The social ball is then in her court.

Q When not mentioned in their original invitation, is it not impolite of the host(ess) to deny their guests the option to smoke? — Maurice Taylor, Shrewsbury, Shropshire.

A Yes, it is impolite. Smoking, unlike drug-taking, remains a legal activity in this country and a long-established part of social life. Therefore, unless there are legitimate health and safety reasons for banning it, it is really too tough of hosts to forbid their guests lighting up. On the other hand, it behoves thoughtful guests to remember that increasing numbers of people find smoking very distasteful and thus they must try to restrict their habit to a minimum.

● *The author is Associate Editor of GQ.*

WORD WATCHING

By Philip Howard

SAUGRENU
a. Fish stew
b. Half-naked
c. Preposterous

PAPELITO
a. A bullfighter's hat
b. A cigarette
c. A butterfly chrysalis

RAAD
a. An assembly
b. A coin
c. A Zulu knobkerry

ROSH HASHANA
a. The Jewish New Year
b. Beef stew with dumplings
c. Mercy to offenders

Answers on page 39

TWO BRAINS

By Raymond Keene

"JUGGLING develops ambidexterity. It promotes rhythmic co-ordination between the two sides of the body and the two sides of the brain. Ambidexterity offers an important key to high performance and balanced living. In sports many of the all-time great athletes such as Jack Dempsey, Joe Louis, Sugar Ray Robinson, Muhammed Ali, Magic Johnson and Michael Jordan are all ambidextrous. In the arts, Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo consciously cultivated ambidexterity." — *Lessons from the Art of Juggling* by Michael Gelb and Tony Buzan.

Question 1:
Which Shakespearean character called whom "juggling fiends"?

Question 2:
A man weighing 140 pounds wishes to cross a bridge that will take a maximum weight of 150 pounds but will collapse if this is exceeded, even minutely. He has three identical objects, each weighing five pounds. Since one object will always be in the air, can he safely cross the bridge by juggling?

CROSS WORDS

by Brian Greer

Back in 1982, my first computer, with a word-processing package, greatly facilitated the task of typing out crosswords — particularly making late changes. Now, I send files electronically to *The Times*, where they are converted into the form in which they appear in the paper. More recently, life has been further simplified by the creation of *Sympathy* by Ross Beresford (co-editor of the Listener Crossword, and the contributor of next week's column). *Sympathy* is one of a range of compiling aids available: an evaluation copy can be obtained from Bryson Limited, 10 Wagtail Close, Twyford, Reading RG10 9ED.

Designing a diagram of whatever type or size is now simple. For example, starting with a blacked-out 15x15 square, you use the mouse to drag across the first 8 squares and they turn white, as do the symmetrically placed squares at the bottom right. As you continue to develop the diagram, the clue numbers appear automatically. Incorporated in the program are several word lists with different levels of vocabulary (and these can be customised). As a result, you can have the whole grid filled in for you, but there are several disadvantages in doing this — obscure, unpleasant, uninteresting and intractable words may be included and in many ways the whole may b better interac the fac words you ar possibil OUAC, ENVAUL mode of more inter can using powers or b dictionaries, memory retrie you can find phrases matching e —P—D-, —L——R-

● *The writer is Crossword E of The Times*

Answers on p

PICTURE LINE

READERS are invited to suggest what Pope John Paul II and Cuban president Fidel Castro might be saying to one another.

This picture will appear again next week with an entry chosen from those submitted.

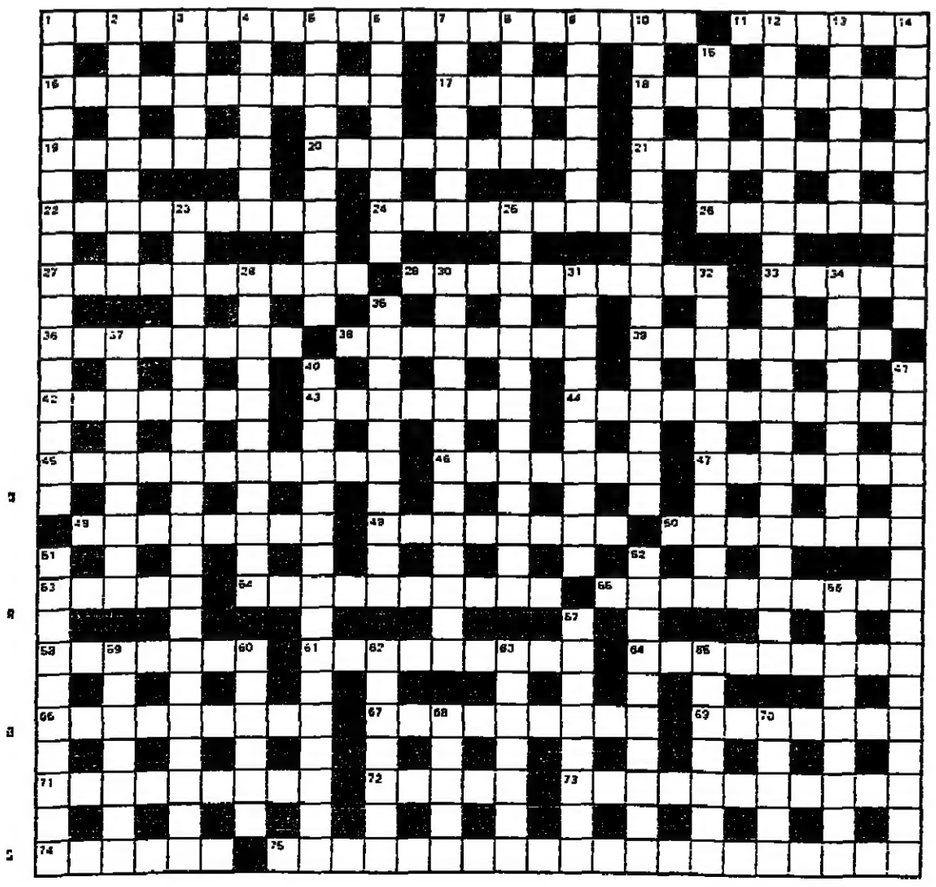
Send "speech bubble" suggestions on a postcard with your name and address to PictureLine, Weekend, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. The closing date for entries is Wednesday, January 28.

Last week's winning caption, left, was submitted by Dr Rajiv R. Menon, of Wimbledon, London.

AFP

JUMBO CROSSWORD 148

The prize for the first correct solution to be opened will be an Alfred Dunhill AD2000, worth £125, the world's first interchangeable, capless rollerball/ballpoint pen. Streamlined and made from black resin with a gold-plated clip, it has perfect writing balance. Entries should be sent to: Jumbo Crossword 148, *The Times* 1 Pennington Street London E1 9XN to arrive by Thursday, February 5. The name of the winner will be published in Weekend on Saturday, February 7



NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

.....

..... POSTCODE .....

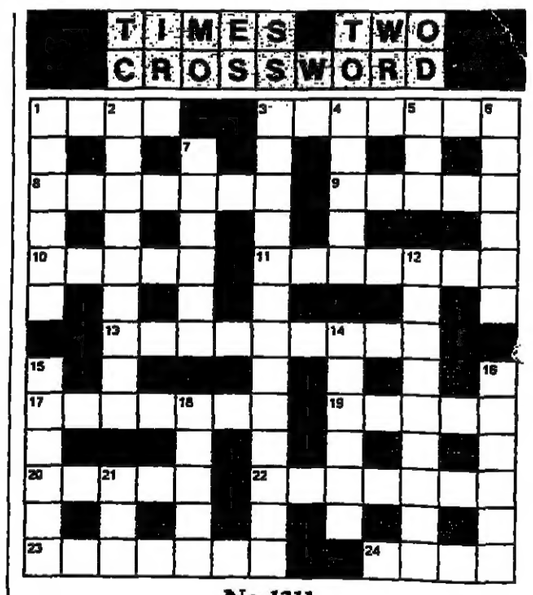
ACROSS

1 Play showing how everyone is proud of killing a toff? (4,4,4,4,4)
11 Fails to move some of the audience (6)
16 Some washing-machines may be returned, with late spinning (11)
17 Group backed by tabloid newspaper, say (5)
18 High-flown form of communication (3-6)
19 Playwright who'd lose little time in depicting martyred priest (7)
20 Soldiers appearing in a salute, showing conformity? (9)
21 Dublin fish pond supplying a dish (5,4)
22 Match? That could be cup-tie, lad! (9)
24 Parasite secure in plastic container (6,3)
26 Performer in part is terrific (7)
27 They lived happily ever after, that's all (3,2,5)
29 Gas-supplier bringing fuel to grill? (6-4)
33 Provide for Tom with some hesitation (5)
36 Bier decorated during hymn of a grave nature (8)
38 Coaches one that's no good in preparation for the match (8)
39 Special display fixed by man on board (3-5)
42 A sequence of four letters about an inhabitant of the Middle East (7)
43 First off, travelling salesmen may offer coats (7)
44 Opinion given about beauty spot? (5,2,4)
45 They closely follow dancing oaf in a disco (11)
46 Advise first of customers in sale to come to the front (7)
47 Worries about first helpings of left over broccoli? (7)
48 Animals very much wanted to follow water, we hear (8)
49 Work out with equipment that's tatty (3-5)
50 Dead end mistakenly clued as "Opening for cars" (3-2-3)
53 Teacher initially accepted by patient class (5)
54 Looking somewhat shabby betrays drunk (4-6)
55 Tossing salads? Ever used this sauce? (5,5)
58 Almost everyone with Henry tucking into excellent drink (7)
61 Sea-sickness? I will moor without lingering, to start with (3-6)
64 With expression of annoyance, shows anger about zero school fees? (9)
66 Agreeing to overlook party in study? (9)
67 Father in foreign city wanting us to return simultaneously (4,5)
69 Exhibition of anger increased in traffic jam (5-2)
71 Mean phone perverts — strange things (9)
72 State leaders in Illinois decide about helping others (5)
73 Learn Plautus in translation — not a model of excellence in Latin (2,4,5)
74 Gets rid of hens, perhaps, without hesitation or interruptions (6)
75 You must press on — taking a quick look at the map! (2,3,9,2,4)

DOWN

1 Not Nelson! (4-6,6)
2 The starting-point for Apollo's visit to Selene? (6-3)
3 Incisiveness associated with women's club (5)
4 Girl learning principal features of theology, theodicy and Arianism (7)
5 Regular shapes artist supplied to the trade in pieces (10)
6 Many sure to be stricken with swollen blood-vessel (8)
7 The Greek who was framed in Spain? (2,5)
8 Obscure hidden secret partly revealed (5)
9 Equipment for cleaning was central feature around heart of hotel (4-3)
10 Prominent issues with which counsel tries to baffle witness? (7,9)
12 English scars celebrated in war song? (3,5,6,2,5)
13 Understatement in stories involving child (7)
14 Fruit trifle on one side — do wrong to tuck in? (10)
15 Lout in light carriage knocking end off Russian vehicle (6)
23 Here's where you'll find it — in a different case (11,10)
25 Glacé sugar is a ridiculous type of food (6,7)
28 A number without fault may receive love without anxiety (11)
30 Important person behind the scenes in emergencies, possibly (8,5)
31 They are able to put their enthusiasm into words (10)
32 Selection of biscuits, much liked — it's prepared for us (6,5)
34 Vulgarity — a quality attributable to size? (9)
35 Lots of shooting, in general, provided by teams (10)
37 Secure supports holding piano for instrumentalists (9)
40 Form of tolerance given, with doctor involved? (6,6,4)
41 Emmenthal factory producing greenery for the house? (5,6,5)
51 Where one makes a note to delete apartment from list? (7,3)
52 What Beethoven had? Energy, skill and curious fit of temper (3-7)
56 60 got excited in opera (9)
57 An old joke for fan of the box? (8)
59 Cover once taken in US state (7)
60 Lag? Many will imprison one with hesitation (6)
62 Scandinavian drink is replacing contents of punch (7)
63 Electrons etc. — bound to miss a large number (7)
65 Children in street turned up papers (7)
68 Arrive at some core achievement (5)
70 Meets, when overcoming objection (5)

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1311

ACROSS

1 Elder and Younger PMs (4)
3 Driving force (7)
8 Caustically sharp (wit) (7)
9 Tripoli its capital (5)
10 Secret hoard (5)
11 Type of victory, as costly as defeat (7)
13 Link: colleague (9)
17 Short piece from eg book (7)
19 More private, secret (5)
20 Move mazily, as smoke (5)
22 Nicotine plant (7)
23 Riled (7)
24 Apollo's instrument (4)

DOWN

1 Fish; sounds like *site* (6)
2 Forceful, incisive (9)
3 Disabled (13)
4 Of the northernmost regions (5)
5 Bath; slow boat (3)
6 Small cloth sample (6)
7 Haunt; dominate mind of (6)
12 Commotion (after absconder) (3,3,3)
14 With hands on hips (6)
15 Japanese hostess (6)
16 Guiding channel (6)
18 Calm (suspicion) (5)
21 Atom with extra/missing electron (3)

SOLUTION TO NO 1310

ACROSS: 1 Grange 4 Mascot 8 Develop 10 Swoon 11 Vast 12 Garrison 14 Diagnosis 18 Euphoria 20 Mesh 22 Shake 23 Florist 24 Attire 25 Medley

DOWN: 1 Godiva 2 Advised 3 Gulp 5 Abstruse 6 Cross 7 Tenant 9 Plaintiff 13 Saboteur 15 Special 16 Red Sea 17 Chatty 19 Plant 21 Rose

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